

Imperial Angel

Price
1/-
Imperial



Exciting new detective story:

Mimsy Crystal

in The Adventure of

**THE MAN WHO
DIED TWICE**

**Magic
FILMS**

Fashion
and much more



Imperial Angel



Price 1/-

A magazine for those who dare to make their lives outside Babylon vol. A, no. 1

A New World of Charm lies before you

WELCOME TO ROMANTIA

the Empire of Truth and Beauty

ROMANTIA is a sovereign nation outside the late 20th century: an empire spanning time and resplendent with the radiance of the great spirits and the simple goodness of every age. It is a bright world filled with the fresh air of sanity and charm, beyond the dank and fetid confines of the late 20th century.

Imperial Angel is the first national paper of Romantia. But what is Romantia? Where is Romantia? There are many ways of explaining Romantia, but probably the simplest is this: Romantia is the True England.

Romantia is a nation where women are pure and feminine, men are chivalrous and true; servants are loyal and trusting; mistresses are trustworthy and kind; where music is tuneful and delightful; entertainment is innocent and joyful; talk is witty and charming; clothes are exquisite; films are glamorous and nothing is poisoned by the drab vulgarity of the late 20th century.

AN IDEAL WORLD?

"But what you are describing is an ideal world," many people will say. We are not sure that this ought to be an objection, but we understand what they mean. Perhaps we cannot always live up to our ideals, but at least we can try to; and when we are trying to, we can, in large measure, succeed. In the late 20th century people were deliberately encouraged not to strive for the ideal, but to strive against the ideal. Clothes were deliberately scruffy and ugly; entertainment was deliberately coarse and chaotic; music was deliberately jarring and impure; morality and family life were deliberately undermined; charm and beauty were defiled in every possible way: people were encouraged in every area of life to develop the worst and nastiest aspects of themselves. We use the past tense because to us, in Romantia, that time is dead and gone. We may have to pass through Babylon in the

course of our lives, we may even have to spend quite a lot of time in it, but that is not our world—it is merely a grubby remnant of a degenerate era, which, to us, is quite passé.

ROMANTIA IS NOT NEW . . .

Romantia is not merely an empire created by a few people in the late 20th century. Romantia is a far wider and deeper thing than that. Romantia is the whole world before the final collapse of civilisation in the 1960s. Every film we watch from the 1930s, '40s or even '50s is part of Romantia. Shakespeare is a Romanian and so is Tennyson. Nelson fought for the true England, for what we now call Romantia, only to distinguish it from the *false* England, the false world, that has been foisted upon us in the later 20th century. Romantia is not something new, something different, something apart. Romantia is the main-stream, the real world. Romantia is civilisation. Babylon—the madness of the late 20th century—(despite the fact that its official propagandists and their sheep-like brainwashers never lose an opportunity of calling it "the real world") is actually an aberration, an odd little cult, which, for all the money and power and propaganda which lies behind it, can never be anything more than a disease of history.

Romantia is that stream of history which has remained unaffected by the disease, and which is gradually calling to it those souls who have remained uncontaminated by the disease, or who are prepared to be cured. For Romantia can cure all who wish to be cured.

In a single phrase: Babylon is disease, Romantia is health.

. . . AND YET ROMANTIA IS NEW

Romantia is simply a continuation of the great stream of civilisation which was broken by the madness of the 1960s—and yet, of course, like every phase of civilisation, Romantia has its own character. It is different from all that went before it, although it is more like the world before the war than either of them are like the strange, diseased world of the late 20th century.

Romantia is different not only because the stream of time is flowing on, and changes nec-

essarily take place, but also because of the very special circumstances in which we now find ourselves. Romantia is a very small empire amid a howling sea of barbarism. There are many disadvantages to such a position of affairs, of course, but there are also advantages. Romantia, in many ways, is able to begin afresh. We are able to approach closer to the ideal world, described at the beginning of this article, than ever before. Romantia is a small world, united by a sense of common purpose, and a common enemy in the poison of the late 20th century. It is a world where trust and kindness, beauty and high ideals can exist in higher concentration than they might in a wider and less purposeful society.

MANY MANSIONS

Some people are confused by Romantia. What is it really like? Is it a frivolous game played by Bright Young People? A world of cocktail parties and clever talk? Is it a serious attempt to preserve civilisation as the darkness of commercialised, bureaucratised barbarism falls ever more thickly over Babylon—even as the monks of the Dark Ages preserved the learning and culture of the ancient world until it could become the basis of mediæval civilisation? Are Romantics staunch, old-fashioned Puritans, or are they Bohemians, who, while they spurn the vulgar immorality of the late 20th century, have decidedly unorthodox ideas of their own? Are they stylish and glamorous or neat and prim?

The answer to all of these questions is: Yes. Romantics are all these things and many more. For Romantia is not a single idea or doctrine: it is a whole world. Within these pages (and those of the various other Romantic publications), you will see the many facets of Romantia; many different attitudes and approaches. Certain things all Romantics have in common, just as all Chinamen or all Babylonians have certain things in common. Perhaps, being a small and close-knit empire, we have a little more in common than the subjects of larger nations—but in other ways, Romantics are far more various than the “citizens” of Babylon: for in Romantia the development of a distinct and highly stylised *persona* is considered normal and charming, whereas in Babylon, a sort of mumbling sameness which is called “being natural” or “being yourself” is the only thing which is encouraged—hence the frequently-heard Romantian quip: “All natives look alike to me”.

There are many ways of being Romantic. You will quickly find your own. You may find more than one: many of us do. Whatever one's assets, one can develop them to the full in Romantia, for Romantia is a world which is on

your side; which wants to appreciate you.

As the iron curtain of international control and electronic mind-manipulation falls across the whole world of the late 20th century, we invite you to join the free world, the world which has not been bought or bullied or poisoned by the corrupt machine of modernism. We invite you to come back to the world of your heritage and your birthright.

Come home to Romantia.

Romantics are not against legitimate progress

LIVING IN THE PAST OR LIVING IN THE FUTURE?

but are building a world of intelligent charm

ROMANTICS are “against the late 20th century”. Does this mean that they are against medical advances or in favour of poverty? Of course not. The inventions of the late 20th century do not belong to the decadent culture of the late 20th century—they are products of the intellectual heritage which it is squandering and despoiling.

A question sometimes asked of Romantics is this: “Surely you cannot be opposed to *everything* in the late 20th century: surely there are some good things.” When one asks what good things, the answers are nearly always much the same: medical advances, certain inventions or technical improvements, the elimination of extremes of poverty and so forth.

In other words, what some people say—very reasonably—is that certain desirable practical advances were made in the late 20th century. We agree, and we are glad that they have been made. We should not like to see them “un-made”, even though, in many cases, we should like to see them take on more civilised forms.

Let us be clear. When we say that we are against the late 20th century, we mean that we are against the *culture* of the late 20th century, not against its technical and practical achievements. The two things should not be confused.

Most Romantics, for example, have no compunction about using modern electronic equipment for shewing Romantic films in their homes, even if the modernist *design* of the equipment is so hideous that they must keep it covered with drapes and tapestries. Nor do they feel that this equipment (except in the subversive and deracinating propaganda of its design) is in any way alien to the world of Romantia. Eliminate that design, or even disguise it (as we do) and the technics can be welcomed into Romantia—that is, they can be welcomed back

into the stream of uncorrupt history, which is where they really belong.

Late 20th century inventions and advances are not due to the culture of the late 20th century. They are logical and necessary developments of our scientific history. The telephone was in use in the 1880s, wireless was used early in this century, television was broadcasting clean programmes to a small audience in the 1930s. Medical advances have been forging ahead steadily for more than two centuries. Barring a complete break-down of social organisation, these developments were bound to continue and advance in the later 20th century in much the ways they did. Whatever the culture and social order of the late 20th century had been, it would have been a world in which technical and practical achievement reached the sort of level it actually did reach. There would have been computers, modern medicine and a productive system which minimised poverty in the late 20th century if the relatively sane and balanced social order of the 1950s had continued into the 1960s, '70s and '80s; or if there had been a great traditional revival in the 1960s instead of a moral and cultural collapse; or, come to that, if the Victorian/Edwardian world-outlook had never been shattered by the Great War.

The garish, soulless, chaotic cultural decadence of the late 20th century cannot claim credit for the achievements of modern science. They are simply its inheritance. They would have been the inheritance of any social order which had existed in the late 20th century, even if it had been (as it ought to have been) a very different one.

Of course it is true that the false culture of the late 20th century is expressed in every line of a piece of modern equipment. That a modern computer or motor car screams the sickness of the late 20th century in its form, its colour, its textural surfaces and every aspect of its appearance. That is a question of design, not of technics—of the cultural language in which modern inventions are presented to us, which is, of course, a degenerate cultural language because the culture of the late 20th century happens to be a degenerate culture. Design is propaganda. It need not be so. One could have motor-cars which used modern techniques but were still dignified and charming rather than slick and proletarian. One could have computers as delightful as 1920s wireless-sets. One could eliminate disease and sickness without having a diseased culture and psychic sickness oozing from every pore of one's popular music and entertainment. One could eliminate poverty without having the unparalleled cultural impoverishment of the late 20th century "consumer society".

It is precisely such a marriage of advanced techniques with cultural soundness—or, conversely, an elimination of cultural disease without eliminating the technical progress upon which that disease has batten, much as a malignant parasite may batten upon the growth of a tree—that Romantics are working for.

Of course, some Romantics may criticise aspects of technical progress and the ways it is employed; they may criticise the false philosophy of rationalist-materialism which half-educated people often confuse with science. That is another question—or rather several other questions. But no one should imagine that to criticise the degenerate culture of the late 20th century is, in itself, to criticise the technical advances which are the heritage of the 18th and 19th centuries.

It is a mistake to think that Romanticism "worships the past" or "wishes to return to former times". Romanticism values what was worthwhile in previous ages and criticises, in a way that few others dare to criticise, the wholesale decadence and cultural bankruptcy of the late 20th century. Nonetheless, we are not trying to return to any earlier time. On the contrary, our aim is to build a future which shall be as civilised as the past; one which can incorporate technical and other advances into an integral, traditional society, creating what would, in many practical respects, be the finest civilisation the world has yet seen.

If we secede from the late 20th century it is precisely in order to build a social and cultural form which can take on the mantle of the future as the modernist world crumbles under the weight of its own decadence.

We hope our critics will read these words with care. We have explained these things before, yet many people continue to believe that there is a war between Romanticism and what they term "technology", or that Romanticism is afraid of the future.

Of course we are not afraid of the future. We are the future.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

STARTING in our very next issue of the *Imperial Angel*, we have the pleasure of bringing you *Angels in Babylon*, the most delightful novel of the decade. *Angels in Babylon* is frothy, warm, witty, utterly un—"realistic" and utterly real. *Angels in Babylon* is life as we live it: an everyday story of seceded folk.

In *Angels in Babylon*, you will meet neo-Victorians, jazz-babies, bonded maidservants, philosophers, Puritans, Bohemians and many others. You will see the life of a developed Romanian colony a year or two from now; you will love, laugh, cry and debate with a people free from the mental and spiritual constraints

of Babylon. Striking forth like pioneers to build a new world amid the decay of the old.

Witty, warm-hearted, charming and full of surprises, *Angels in Babylon* is a novel of Romania: read it in the *Imperial Angel*, from next issue.

Romantia is magic—but then so is Babylon

YOUR GUIDE TO LIVING IN A MAGICAL WORLD

or: How to be Enchanted instead of Cursed

HE world is a magical place, for better or worse. The dark magic of Babylon makes life ugly and poisonous. The white magic of Romania makes life beautiful and pure.

Many people today believe themselves to inhabit a world without magic. Life seems drab and mundane. If they did but know it, magic surrounds us on every side—but a lot of it is not very pleasant magic and is, as it were, "anti-magical magic"—rather like the magic of the White Witch in Narnia, which made it always winter and never Christmas. In fact, one might say that the world is such a natural, ordinary magical place that it takes very strong magic indeed to make it as drab and un-magical as it is in the late 20th century.

Behold the simple *realness* of this face and consider how false and corrupt a thing was the so-called "naturalness" which the late 20th century woman was indoctrinated into adopting.

Looking upon this photograph, one can begin to feel the horror and tragedy of exposing children to late 20th century television programmes or other instruments of Babylonian conditioning. It is not simply a matter of letting them see or hear things, but of introducing powerful influences which are designed to change and distort their whole outlook and being. How clearly this distortion is visible in the face of the late 20th century person, when we compare it to the poise and innocence of an undistorted face.

Of course, this distortion does not affect only children. Many adults believe that, because they understand what they are doing and can criticise the programmes, they can watch Babylonian television unaffected. But soul-distortion goes on at many levels, most of them unconscious. One might as well say that because one understands the effects of arsenical poisoning, one can eat arsenic with immunity. If one imagines that the Babylonian soul was not deeply and grievously poisoned, one need merely compare the face and pose of any popular actress of the last quarter of the 20th century with that depicted on our cover.

Here, in this single picture, do we see the true innocence which can be, and gradually is being, re-established in Romania as a new generation is freed from the mind-slavery of the electronic circus and released once again to be truly human.

Such effects are not produced, of course, if the machine is showing a film made before the Second Modernist War or (usually) even before 1960; but even the commercial announcements made in the film's intervals will be heavy with anti-magical force. Television, of course, is not the source of anti-magic, but it is one of the main conduits through which anti-magic is sluiced into the late 20th century. Another term for anti-magic is, of course, psychic poison.

Magic (in the sense in which we use the term here) is that which connects us with the spiritual realm; with tradition, with truth and beauty, with order and harmony. Anti-magic is the reign of falsehood and ugliness; the attack on tradition, the binding of the soul

to the material realm and to the chaos and disorder of the inferior psychic regions. Rock "music" is a perfect example of this latter—every "song" is a ritual of chaos which has a psychic effect far deeper and more sinister than many people (including most—but not all—of the performers themselves) suspect.

This is what we mean when we say that the whole world is magical. The very existence of the modern world is dependent upon thousands of magical acts or spells which create and maintain the strange, illusory, neurotic world of late 20th century materialism. Every news-broadcast is a chant which helps to weave the grotesque, gargantuan world-concept of modernism, which, if it were not so created in the living imaginations of millions of watchers could not be crystallised into physical reality.

We live, then, in a magical world; but as we warned you at the beginning, much of the magic is not very pleasant.

YOUR MAGICAL WORLD

What then? Are we but passive victims of the dark magic of Babylon? Have we discovered a magical world only to learn that it is our prison? By no means. Once we have begun to understand the ritual nature of words and actions and objects, we find ourselves in a position to create our own influences, to negate the poisons of the late 20th century and to build a world of light and truth and beauty. Superficial people, when they see the attention which Romantics pay to such things as clothes, furniture, pictures, music, the words they use and the ways in which they entertain themselves, assume that Romanticism itself is something superficial. Nothing could be further from the truth. In transforming each aspect of life, the Romantic is taking control of her own world; freeing it from the domination of Babylon and constructing a world of her own making.

In this and succeeding issues of the *Imperial Angel*, we shall be giving advice upon the hundreds of tiny magical acts which can make your life more real and beautiful and counteract the effects of Babylonian psychic poisoning.

WHAT WE DO NOT MEAN

This word "magic" is one that crops up more than occasionally in the *Imperial Angel*. It is perhaps important therefore that we should say a few words about what we do not mean by it. Mr. Anthony Cooney, editor of the *Liverpool Newsletter*, takes us to task for employing the term "astral" in the sense of the astral plane or realm. He writes:—"I do not feel that such words from New Age mysticism as 'astral' have anything to offer. 'New Agism' is the pseudo-religion which Modernism proposes for its world-state; its ghastly 'Global Village'."

Let us make it clear from the beginning that we have nothing in common with the so-called "New Age" movement. Whether or not it is being promoted by the tenebrous forces which lie behind the modern world as its new international "state religion" we cannot say. It is not impossible. What is certain is that the "New Age" movement combines all that is worst and most erroneous in modernism with a vague and subversive spirituality. This is leavened with a certain amount of traditional doctrine, so debased and corrupted as to be worse than worthless.

René Guénon, the greatest sage of this century and the man most responsible for re-introducing traditional doctrine in its pure form to the modern world, felt compelled to begin his life's work of exposition with two books denouncing and exposing the forerunners of the "New Age" movement: *Le Theosophisme, histoire d'une pseudo-religion* and *L'Erreur spirituelle* (i.e. the spiritualist fallacy). As Guénon pointed out, such movements are wholly steeped in modernist error. Their "revealed" doctrines tend to parody the scientific notions popular at the time of their "revelation" (i.e. those believed by scientists about ten years previously), as well as invariably incorporating such chestnuts as "spiritual evolution" (an inversion of the true doctrine of manifestation, which was taken up amid a welter of obscure jargon by the science-fiction "Catholic" "philosopher" Teilhard de Chardin). From the beginning these movements hungrily assimilated all the most degenerative aspects of modernist deviation, beginning with Freudianism and Darwinism. In the later 20th century they became saturated with feminism, Californian pop-psychology and every other manifestation of mental and psychic decay which that diseased era had to offer. Such pseudo-spiritual movements, where they are not laughable, are truly sinister, taking the forms of parodies, perversions and inversions of traditional philosophy which are part of what Guénon terms the transition from anti-Tradition (which characterises the modern world) to counter-Tradition, which is Tradition Stood on its head. *Demon est Deus inversus*.

Precisely why Guénon felt it necessary to begin his life's work with such an exposure is not only because such delusions are dangerous, but also because they are all too easily confused with the truth of which they are, insofar as they contain anything which is not mere nonsense, dark parodies. Guénon did not want his work to be confused with these modernist perversions of truth. Neither do we.

MAGIC AND RELIGION

The *Imperial Angel* contains many things which do not correspond with the materialistic out-

look of the 20th century. Some of these are expositions of traditional doctrine. Some are mere pieces of amusement—the games, for example, which we play with time—which, nonetheless, have a serious purpose insofar as they help to protect us from the universal grip of Babylon. We explain in many ways how "magic" is inherent in the acts and words of everyday life. We even suggest minor rituals for bringing life into a more harmonious state and detaching it from the grasp of Babylon.

Some readers have expressed uncertainty about some of this. Is the practice of magic and the acceptance of traditional doctrines about, say, the stars and planets, conformable with the life of a Christian? Every Romantic, of course must make up his own mind, but we would say this. There is a notion abroad among some Christians today (and often the better sort—the sort who do not want to get entangled in any "New Age" silliness) that the correct attitude for a Christian is to accept all the tenets of modern rationalist-materialism in their entirety, with the Christian religion neatly balanced on top of an otherwise entirely laicised, materialist universe. This, needless to say, was not the attitude of earlier Christians. How could it have been, since modern rationalist-materialism did not exist? They inhabited not a dead, accidental, mechanistic universe, but a living, intelligent one:—a magical universe, one might say. It is true that some Christian fathers, such as St. Augustine preached against astrology, but one must understand that they were by no means denying the fact that the twelve celestial mansions and the seven planets were vital principles of the universal order, that they influenced everything from the musical scale to the nature of an eagle or the colour of a man's hair. Such beliefs were fundamental to all men of their time and they are as true today as they have always been. What they were denying was the astrological heresy of determinism: the doctrine that a man's actions are what they are because of the signs under which he was born; the doctrine which denies free will and takes away a man's responsibility for his own actions whether good or evil. That is a doctrine which crops up continually throughout history (and must logically be believed by all true materialists, except that the determining influences for them will not be the stars).

Luther, Milton and Hooker, just as much as St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante and St. Francis of Assisi believed in a cosmos which was intelligent, ordered and hierarchical; in the Great Chain of Being reaching from the highest Archangel in heaven to the humblest flower growing on the earth; they believed that all earthly things were what they were not

through "accidents of nature" but because of their place in the cosmic harmony; that the beauty of a flower (to take an example examined at greater length elsewhere in this issue) is not just a subjective reaction of the human brain to a chance product of "evolution", but an eternal reality which lies behind the manifestation of the flower and is its cause, its meaning and its essence.

To live in a magical universe, in this sense of the term, is to believe what all Christians have believed until the last century or so, and what all traditional people everywhere have always believed.

Magic, when it is a pact with dark spirits must always be wrong. Magic performed for material ends, to wrest the ways of the universe to one's own purposes may be wrong (though we cannot see why it is more wrong than what is called "technology", which is simply another way of doing the same thing). But the simple, everyday acts of magic which shape our lives and the ambience in which we live—we cannot see how these can be wrong. In any case, we perform them all the time whether we will or no. They are also performed upon us by the forms and propaganda of Babylon, which are far from Godly. The only question is whether the magic which surrounds us shall be good and harmonious or evil and chaotic. Our purpose is to ensure, as far as possible that it is good and harmonious.

BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE IN MAGIC!

Some of our readers, of course, will be inclined to treat the whole subject with a degree of skepticism. "I do not believe in magic," they will say. Well enough. A perfectly good Victorian attitude to the matter: it takes all sorts to make Romantia.

If some of our readers prefer to regard our references to magic in a purely figurative and symbolic sense, that is acceptable to us.

What it is important to understand is that psychic poisoning is very far from being merely a figure of speech. One is perfectly at liberty to interpret it in a purely psychological sense if one wishes: but there is no question that the incantations or propaganda of the great modernist brainwashing machine have, and are designed to have, a cumulative effect upon the soul—or, if you prefer, upon the unconscious mind.

Whatever terms we use, whatever our picture of the universe, it is certain that we have a complex and highly sensitive psycho-physical constitution which is being played upon expertly and continually by the modernist machine in order to deracinate us—to turn us into rootless, atomised creatures, cut off from every normal bond and order and subservient only to

the *diktats* and "suggestions" of the enemy. It is true that these "suggestions" are contained not merely in explicit propaganda, but in every manufactured article, every song, every gesture of every public "personality" disengaged by the machine for our consumption.

It is equally true that by reversing these influences: by extirpating, as far as possible, enemy artefacts, broadcasts and other influences from our lives and by bringing in good, healthy, human influences in their stead, we can begin to free ourselves. Call it magic or not as you choose: but do not become a slave by default from failing to recognise its existence.



FASHION

HOW TO LOOK UP-TO-DATE

The four simple secrets

How do Romantic girls look so utterly up-to-date? This article gives away the four simple secrets of dressing divinely.

What is it about Romantic girls? They do not look a bit late-20th-century. Every seam breathes up-to-the-minute dash and style. Of course some of them wear nothing but authentic 1930s clothes, but they are few. I have known two impoverished but chic Romantic girls, both dressed from head to toe in garments manufactured in the late 20th century from cheap artificial materials, be stopped in the street by Babylonians asking where they acquired their "period clothes". On the other hand, many girls who make every effort to dress in a Romantic manner never seem to look like anything but late-20th-century types "dressed up".

Is it a sort of conjuring trick? Is it hypnotism? Not at all. It is a simple matter of knowing a few simple rules. Most Romantiquettes

do not regard them as rules at all. They are second nature, simply part of being a Romantic rather than a Babylonian. If you ask them how they give the impression of being up-to-date rather than late-20th-century, even when wearing late-20th-century clothes, they might find it hard to tell you. However, they acquired these instincts over months, probably years, of being Romantic and mixing with other Romans. With the four secrets we are about to reveal, you can achieve the up-to-the-minute *mirroir* overnight.

1. HAT AND GLOVES

The first secret is the simplest of all, yet if you follow it you have made the most gigantic stride (not that Romantiquettes make gigantic strides, but you know what we mean) toward looking utterly *it*. Wear a hat and gloves. We apologise if you have heard it before, but it really is the Great Secret. It does not matter if you wear an authentic Chanel outfit, without a hat and gloves you will look like a native. On the other hand, a nylon dress from the British Home Stores, worn with neat white gloves and a stylish hat (quite possibly from the same British Home Stores) will convince most casual observers that you might have stepped out of a 1936 fashion plate.

2. BANISH THE FLOPPIES!

Now you are wearing your hat and gloves there are very few things that can go wrong. Of course, it is only a beginning. You want to develop your *mirroir*. But you are reasonably safe. You do not look like a native. You are starting to look properly up-to-date. There are, of course, things you could do to spoil the impression. You could, for example, wear workmen's boots or training shoes, or denim jeans, or a coat with a zipper or poppers. Then you would look like a Babylonian barbarian in your hat and gloves: but since only a Babylonian barbarian could even conceive of wearing such things, we can safely assume that you will not.

Are there any things you might *really* do that would spoil the impression?

Yes. The most dangerous would be to wear a soft cotton dress or skirt. "Why is that so dangerous?" you may ask. The danger lies in what is known as "the Laura Ashley look"—so called after a chain of shops which flourished in the later 20th century peddling a particularly ersatz brand of pseudo-aesthetic and pseudo-traditional style, which was sodden with the sub-"hippie" mentality. Nothing is more deadly to authentic Romanticism, whether in dress or in the decoration of the home than this "look", or any of its many post-'60s variants. Some inexperienced Rom-

antiquettes, assume that soft, flowery, cotton prints will give a charming, romantic appearance: but the truth is that only a very experienced Romantic dresser can get away with them without looking Babylonian. The nylon dress from the British Home Stores, mentioned earlier, though hardly the ideal, would be a far safer choice. The important thing for a Romantic girl is to look *smart* and *groomed*. Anything which tends to "floppiness" is to be treated with the greatest caution, and, in the early stages, avoided altogether.

Smartness, except in rather dull "business" dress, was unknown to the late 20th century girl. The late 20th century machine did not allow its serfs the smartness of personal dignity, but only that of regimented labour. The dress of the late 20th century was divided between that of self-contempt and self-mockery (as displayed especially in almost all "casual" clothes of the period) and that of commercial conformism. The up-to-date girl, on the other hand, strives always to be "pin-neat" as the Duchess of Windsor was described in the 1950s—a term which in the '30s is never used as it is taken for granted that any self-respecting girl will be neat. Self-respect is precisely what Babylon steals from its slaves and what the Romantic girl gently but firmly takes back. Remember those white gloves and live up to them. You can never go far wrong.

3. MAKE-UP

Make-up is a subject in itself, requiring an article of its own, but certain simple points should be noted. 1) You should wear it. Hat and gloves without make-up look inauthentic. Just a native dressed up. 2) It should be noticeable. Late 20th century make-up tried to pretend it was not there. Up-to-date make-up is proud of itself. Red, clearly-shaped lips; eyes shadowed in rich, pre-Raphaelite hues; eyebrows pencilled with firm, thin, film-star curves, cheek-bones more subtly shaped with rouge (never call it "blusher", please): these are the elements of today's *maquillage*. A face without make-up looks offensively naked and quite out of date.

4. STOCKINGS

Like make-up, stockings are necessary. Bare legs on the hottest day, or woollen socks on the coldest are signs of nativism. Tights are utterly *infra dig*—a sordid and unhygienic remnant of the dreadful 1960s (before which time sheer tights were entirely associated with the vulgar self-display of show-girls—today they have something at once vulgar and old-womanish about them). For many Romantiquettes the abandonment of tights is one of the

first steps toward liberation from the Baby Babylon invasion of the person. The best stockings are seamed, non-stretch ones from the '50s or early '60s. Next best are seamless ones of the same vintage, then seamed imitation ones by such firms as Aristoc. Silk, of course are delightful, but even cheap stretch stockings of a very fine texture can be made to serve (generally black is the best colour if one is thrown back on fine stretch stockings—it seems to give a slightly realer appearance). Real, non-stretch ones are not so terribly hard to find, and this magazine undertakes to sell a pair or two, at 1/- Imperial (£1 Babylonian) each, to any beginning Romantiquette who orders them.

DO IT NOW!

These then are the four simple secrets. Of course they do not tell you all you need to know about Romantic dressing—far from it—but if you begin with these you can start to look like a real, up-to-date Romantic girl, not in a month's time, not next week, but tomorrow.

Whoever you are, Wherever you are,

YOU CAN SECEDE!

You may have to work in the late 20th century, but no one can force you to live in the late 20th century. Secession is possible to every one, whatever his circumstances.

Secession is the great key to the gates of Romantia. One who has seceded is no longer a part of the drab, ugly world of the late 20th century. That world is no longer "the world" to us; it is merely a strange and unpleasant excrescence which exists somewhere on the fringes of the real world. The real world is Romantia—which is not just a few people existing here and now, but the whole civilised world, as it is seen upon our cinema screens, depicted in all our books, from Jane Austen to P.G. Wodehouse, and accepted by every one before the strange disease of the 1960s turned dear old England into demented Babylon.

Every one knows, in his heart of hearts, that Romantia, in this widest sense (though he may not know its name), is reality and that the late 20th century is a grotesque aberration. Romantics are the few who have had the courage to act upon that knowledge, to reject the disease and create for themselves a small but growing sanctuary of health and wholeness. Romantics have seceded and cut loose from the late 20th century. They are no longer citizens of the bleak, garish, modernist world-order.

but subjects of Romantia.

It is an exacting definition and many people—often the best people; the ones who are nearest to being true Romantians—wonder whether they can match up to it.

"I am fully in sympathy with Romantia but I could not really be a Romantian because my work keeps me in contact with the late 20th century" is the sort of thing which people often say. This is the result of a misunderstanding. Being a Romantian is, before all else, a state of soul.

One can be a Romantian under any set of external conditions. A number of Romantians have found various ways of living which avoid regular involvement with Babylon, but this is by no means possible to all of us, and a Romantian is no less a Romantian because he works in Babylon. The question is one of allegiance.

Certainly the fact that one must seek one's livelihood in Babylon does not and must not mean that one is thereby chained to that world. You are a free spirit, wherever you may work. You may be employed by Babylon, but you are not owned by Babylon. You may have to work in Babylon, but you do not have to live in Babylon.

Suppose one was living in a country under foreign occupation. One would have to obey the laws of a foreign governor. Many aspects of one's working and outward life would, no doubt be directed by occupation regulations. Nonetheless, all decent people would stay loyal in their hearts. They would sing the old songs and tell the old stories to their children. If their language was made illegal they would make sure that they spoke it wherever they were safe from being overheard by the secret police. They would teach it to their children. In every possible particular they would make sure that they followed the old ways in their private lives.

Britain—like all other countries—in the late 20th century is in many respects like a country under alien occupation. Many people can remember a time, before the 1960s, when, whatever faults there might have been, the country was still fundamentally sane and decent. They remember a time when popular music was innocent and clean; when wireless and television entertainment upheld family values rather than doing everything in their power to destroy them; when people dressed with dignity and charm like people who still had self-respect; when women were feminine and children were childlike. This is not the place to conjecture as to the forces which have undermined order and sanity, innocence and charm; but we may note that something has happened very much like an alien occupation. Normal values have been stood on their heads.

The "official line" about family life, decency, dignity, entertainment, womanhood, childhood, and anything else you might name has been suddenly reversed. Without consulting any one, the cliques which control the modern world—broadcasting cliques, journalistic, financial, political, business cliques—have told us to think differently, act differently and be different from what people have been before: in many respects, to be the opposite of what human beings have been throughout the course of recorded history.

A Romantian is one who says "No! I shall not be poisoned and uprooted by the cult of Babylon. I shall live my life, to whatever extent I can, as a normal, traditional human being." As you see, the Romantian is very much like a person in an occupied nation—not necessarily a member of the resistance but just an ordinary, decent person who refuses to allow his way of life, his speech and his very thoughts be dictated by the oppressor but who remains loyal to truth and decency in every way he can. He may not be a hero who courts death or imprisonment, but also he is not a slave who acts as his own gaoler and alters his whole life to fit the enemy's demands.

Of course, we are not actually under alien occupation (not, at least, in the usual sense) and that is a fact which has some advantages for us and some disadvantages. The main disadvantage is that, because the madness of the late 20th century has been introduced slowly and carefully, and with the most sophisticated techniques of saturation-propaganda, most people are unable to identify it even if they feel uneasy about many aspects of Babylon. If one was really in an occupied country and one said to a reasonably decent person—"I am against the tyrant. I speak our language at home. As best I can I live my life as our people have lived it, not as he tells us to live it" the person to whom you spoke would know what you meant and agree with it. Even if you spoke to a miserable collaborator he would still know what you meant, even if he reported you to the secret police. Try to convey your traditional loyalties to a native of Babylon and you will have a hard time of it. If you have his undivided attention for half an hour or more he may come to understand you and he may even agree (a surprising number of people do once they understand) but explaining is not terribly easy, and in many cases impossible. The natural loyalty of the majority of the populace which, in the case of a real occupation, could always be called on as a quiet wellspring of sympathy, understanding and support has been largely undermined by this subtler and more devious form of occupation. Indeed, no simple and obvious occupation or tyranny

could have made such deep and disfiguring changes in the thoughts, speech and appearance of people at large. People would have remained quietly loyal, silently stubborn: they would have rejected the tyrant in their hearts. In the Communist countries people remained fundamentally unchanged for decades, while the spirit of the 1960s was undermining the West. Only when Communism crumbled and the more tenuous tyranny of international pop-capitalism began to infiltrate did the real character of the people begin to degenerate.

Such are the disadvantages of the Babylonian form of occupation. The advantages are obvious. In standing out against the occupation; in dressing, living and speaking as you choose, you are not risking life or liberty. You may occasionally be misunderstood (although Romantian ways are often admired by the natives who, for the most part, do not really like the world they have been tricked and confused into accepting) but you will not be tortured or shot; you will not lose your home or your job; you will not live in fear of the thunderous knock on the door in the small hours. In fact, you can live a very pleasant and comfortable life without concealing your sympathies and with only the smallest degree of compromise.

Which brings us back to the point where we began. Can you, working in Babylon, be a Romantian? Of course you can. If you are against Babylon and the ugly world of the Babylonian cult, then you are already with us. If your loyalties are with Romantia rather than Babylon, then you are already a friend of Romantia. If you want to live your private life in accordance with Romantian ways (which is to say, in accordance with the ways of all normal people before the Babylonian occupation), then you are ready to become a Romantian. It is as simple as that.

The home is the centre of Romantia. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Romantian Empire is precisely an archipelago of Romantian homes. Even if, in some way, you were forced to disguise yourself as a fully-brainwashed Babylonian every time you set foot outside your home (or the homes of other Romantians) you could still be a Romantian provided your home was truly a part of Romantia. You could lead a double life if necessary, if your loyalty was with Romantia. Perhaps that will be necessary some day. Perhaps there are Romantian secret agents who find it necessary today. Of course such a double life would be an unusual and, for most people, uncomfortable way of living. We only mention such an extreme possibility in order to make it clear that a seceded Romantian is a seceded Romantian under any set of external circumstances. One tries, of course, to make one's

external circumstances as favourable as possible: but even if they were as unfavourable as possible, that would really make no difference to the fact that one was a Romantian and did not belong to Babylon.

But how, if one's working life is in Babylon, can one really be a Romantian? Let us take a parallel case: that of the Jews. Orthodox Jewish families live very much within the Jewish world. Their life is shaped and formed by Jewish ways and Jewish customs. In the case of the more traditional sects, such as the Hasidim, their clothes conform to an exacting traditional standard. Strict Jews do not patronise television, which they describe as "an open sewer in the living room": their entertainments, their stories, their songs, their food, their rituals and their whole way of life are Jewish. The fact that many of them may spend their working lives outside the Jewish community, whether as taxi drivers or schoolmistresses makes no difference to the fact that they are Jews and their life is a Jewish one.

Romanticism, of course, is not, like Judaism, a religion—although many Romantics regard a Romantic life as the only one, in an otherwise corrupt and degenerate age, which is compatible with true Christianity. It is, like Judaism, a nation and a way of life: a culture which predates the aberration of the later 20th century and which has the confidence and the wholeness to reject that aberration utterly. Romanticism is your culture, the birthright of every Englishman and every civilised person. It is important, of course, to make communication with other Romantics, even if one has to travel to do it. It is important to attend Romantic events and build one's own Romantic life. But there is no doubt that, whatever one's circumstances, one can be a Romantic, and whatever one's livelihood, one's nation can be Romantia.

Whoever you are, wherever you are, you can secede. A healthy, happy, English life is your birthright, and no one can take it away from you. Perhaps you will have to struggle a little for that birthright—not nearly as much as the brave soldiers and nurses and mothers at home who struggled for our dear nation in the wars of the past, and perhaps of the future when we may have to fight for our freedom and wholeness once again, but you may have to struggle a little—to travel sometimes, to stand out against the crowd sometimes: trivial things compared with the noble deeds of former days. In return, you will find fine new friends, and a world of beauty, elegance, loyalty and trust such as Babylon cannot begin to offer.

Consider carefully the question of secession. Do you really owe any loyalty to the modernist occupation? Is the shallow, garish late 20th century your world? Or are you ready to make

a declaration in your heart that you are no longer part of it: that from this day forth the modern world is an alien country and you are a subject of the True England. There are, of course, ritual acts of secession: more formal ways of renouncing the enemy and his world, but the first and most important step is this internal resolution: this declaration in your own heart that you have seceded. Are you ready to make it? Will you do it now, today? or do you need more time to consider it? In any case, think seriously about it. Either way you take it—even if you decide to do nothing and remain under the tyranny of Babylon—it is one of the most important decisions of your life.

MIMSY CRYSTAL

in a thrilling new detective story

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MAN WHO DIED TWICE

by Miss Priscilla Langridge

THE long, golden summer of 2025 gave way suddenly in the middle of October to a sharp, wintry Autumn. The air took on that smoky tang of the third season and bit frostily at the finger-ends. Light, misty fogs rolled up the streets and down the side-alleys of the city.

Mimsy Crystal was entertaining her maternal grandfather by walking the streets with him at dusk; he in opera-cloak and silk hat, she in a tulip-shaped calf-length crinoline and cape of midnight blue.

"Y'know, Mimsy, it's a curious thing how a place can change. This was a dreadful place when I was your age. You'd have hated it; or perhaps you wouldn't. I mean, you wouldn't have been you, would you?"

"Shouldn't I?" asked Mimsy Crystal. The question intrigued her. Such mysteries always did, and she was interested to hear what her grandfather had to say on the subject.

"Well, it all depends what you mean by 'you', does it not? If I could somehow transport you back to the London of my middle years, I think you would hate it. It was a sort of temple to greed and ugliness and the loose spirit of the age. You would see young people in jeans deliberately torn open at the knees or in appalling fluorescent jackets. You would have seen mothers and grandmothers in jeans (though not usually torn ones); men of my age in the most absurd clothes; deliberately anarchic music in almost every public house—the respectably dressed people had a tone and an air which was unbelievably slick and caddish;

their motor-cars reflected the same mentality. The hoardings and omnibus advertisements were quite grotesque—well, you have seen pictures and films of it; how does it strike you?"

"It always seems like a chaotic nightmare; but I imagine it is rather exaggerated—like the stories of Victorian matrons covering piano legs. I dare say some people and places were like that—."

"No; it all was. You can't imagine it now. It seems like another world. You see ordinary people now and they have a sense of dignity and solidity which even high-ranking Statesmen did not have in those days. You see those girls with their tight waists and tulip skirts. People just did not hold themselves like that; they did not have pride in themselves; they were loose and casual all the time."

"It seems very hard to believe. I think it must have been like a nightmare."

"It was. I always thought so. But suppose, for the sake of argument, that you had been born when I was born—that was in 1950, or when your mother was born, which was '76. You have the same mind and the same emotions; the same temperament and the same disposition. Now, what do you think you would have made of the London of, say, the '80s or '90s?"

"I think I should have hated it, just as you did."

"I wonder. You are very much a child of your time today. You don't hate what you see about you now."

"But these things are not just questions of fashion. They are fundamental. No doubt if I had been born in the Victorian age I should have liked parlour songs, which I must confess do not interest me today. If I had been a mediæval I should have adored troubadours. These things are questions of fashion. But I have heard the music of the late 20th century. It was not just another fashion; it was evil."

"Just so; and most people would agree with you now—but then—well, your mother certainly listened to that music."

"Not really!"

"She was not a great devotee of it or anything, but she went through a phase. People did not see anything wrong in it then. One was not expected to criticise it."

"But they could not make people like it."

"Like it. Did they like it? I have often wondered. They certainly thought they did. But you, my dear, would you have been any different?"

"I think I should."

"Yes, and all these young people passing us on the streets; so neat, so upright, so very modern; they think the same of themselves, but the law of averages is against them. Only one young person in several thousand really

reacted against the things they were being fed in those days, so I think we must conclude that if the young people of today had been born then, they would have been the same. In other words, they would have been completely different people. In the aggregate we can see that is true, but in the individual case it seems strange in the extreme. Can one imagine a Mimsy Crystal in torn jeans or gyrating to jungle noises of a sort that no decent jungle ever produced, or (forgive me) regarding certain sins as entirely natural and unexceptionable? Would she be Mimsy Crystal at all, in the sense that we know and love her? Yet if she was, as her grandfather was, a natural-born rebel against her times and all that they represented, would she not be very different from the Mimsy of today?"

"As different as a man in wartime is from the same man in time of peace. As different as a man alone with a sword among a tribe of brigands from the same man at a garden-party. In one world one may be at peace, in another one must be at war. One is still the same person."

"In your case, Mimsy, I think that is true. But most people—even the cleverest and most charming—are only sheep who conform to whatever is there to be conformed to, which means that they are entirely different people from one generation to the next."

"It makes the world feel very strange and insecure."

"I suppose that is how it feels to me. The lasting scars of the times I was born in, hey? But I shouldn't inflict them on you, my Mimsy. You're a blessed generation and you'll never realise how blessed. That's another thing about generations. One generation is mown down in a beastly war: the next generation, or even the younger brothers of the same one, doesn't feel particularly grateful or relieved to be out of it. How much less can you people be expected to feel relieved to be free of the cultural decay of my era? The world you know is the only one as far as you're concerned."

"Are we so very dreadful?"

"Not at all. It is simply natural. It is one thing I don't envy you. Every day, for as long as I live, I shall take immense pleasure in just walking the streets of London, or of any town; in going into a village post office or taking tea at a wayside teashop. Just breathing decent air and seeing decent things about me. It is a joy you'll never know, my dear. You know, I didn't enjoy life much when I was young. It was a nightmare to me, as I believe it would have been to you, but I think it was all worthwhile, because I can now say something that I could never have conceived of before—that I am really, fundamentally happy. Happy just to be alive and look about me and breathe the air of a sane world."

They had reached their destination: a tall, Georgian building of a sort and in a part of London that would have brought its cost into the millions in the days when London was an overcrowded hive of post-human international commercialism. Today it was inhabited by a group of Bohemian young people of the sort who formed the lowest stratum (financially speaking) of the new leisured class.

Though it was Autumn, Spring was in the air of the spirit. The new romanticism was flowering in every branch of the arts. Serious music, poetry, sculpture and painting—arts which had been dead for nearly a century; wastelands inhabited by neurotic *poseurs* and avoided by every one else—were undergoing a glorious renaissance. The *avant garde* of the new movement waged war on all that the late 20th century had believed in: "realism", "sincerity", "originality", "experimentation" and "democracy" were the discredited catchwords of the old order. "Profundity", "truth", "beauty", "order" and "harmony" were the words one used today.

Interminable steep, narrow stairs had to be negotiated before one reached what was affectionately termed "the garret"—actually a reasonably spacious top-floor flat. It belonged to Charles de Marechal, one of the leading spirits of the new movement. The room was dominated by a rich, deep-hued tapestry of Brunnhilde's immolation by Imogen Montalban. Little terracotta Roman votive lamps burned scented oils in various parts of the room. There was a small party of young men in sea-green or dove-pale waistcoats and floppy silk ties, and girls in costumes hinting at the mediæval. Nowhere was to be found the sharp, crisp smartness of the prevailing modern Art-Nouveau style, yet everything was carried off with a certain neatness and crisp charm, just as even the smartest style of the late 20th century was pervaded by the atmosphere of sloppiness and tawdriness. Mimsy felt a little out of place in her fashionable tulip-dress—she never seemed entirely at home in any company—but she was quickly made welcome, and presented her grandfather.

"Mr. Carman, this is indeed an honour," said Charles de Marechal. His pleasure was unfeigned, for Mimsy Crystal's grandfather was Robert Carman, one of the founders of the new æsthetics and author of such seminal works as *The Rediscovery of the World*, *The Lie of Realism* and *The Remythologisation of Life*. There was a moment of strained silence. Robert Carman was essentially a shy man. Charles de Marechal was not, but he felt a certain reticence about taking his usual flamboyant lead with the man who, more than any other living being, had influenced the whole course of his life and thought.

"We were talking, coming over, of London in the late 20th century," said Mimsy Crystal.

"What a gruesome subject," said Charles de Marechal, "was it really as hateful as the books and films make it appear?"

"No," said Robert Carman, "it was worse."

"Do you think," said de Mareschal, "that any one actually enjoyed the extraordinary popular music of the period, or was it a case of the emperor's clothes?"

"Curiously enough," said Mimsy's grandfather, "we were discussing that very question on our walk. The truth is that I do not know. Certainly a lot of people believed that they liked it, and I suppose one might argue that to believe one likes a thing is to like it. On the other hand, can one actually like what is inherently ugly and inimical? People do not always know what they are enjoying. For example, one may be very poor for years, and believe that one hates poverty, but later, when one is successful, one may look back on one's years of poverty as the happiest time of one's life and see in it a purity and innocence and capacity for pleasure in simple things that one no longer has. The old-fashioned "realists" might have said that one was simply idealising the past; looking at it through rose-tinted spectacles: that one's dislike of poverty was real and one's later illusion of past happiness merely a re-interpretation of history. But I think not. Our emotions are complex: we can love and hate at the same time. Sometimes we can perceive the love better with retrospect, sometimes the hate; sometimes we can see that we were happy when we thought ourselves unhappy or unhappy when we thought ourselves happy. Sometimes one can coast cheerfully enough through the most trying circumstances, and only after it is all over does one say 'that was terrible, I could not bear to go through another day of it as long as I live.' You know, I think the late 20th century was rather like that. People, for the most part, accepted it because they knew nothing else. They immersed themselves in its spirit and its products, pretended to enjoy them, but beneath it all was the tension and misery of people who are acting against their own nature. Suicide increased all through the period, so did drug-addiction and divorce. One person in four sought psychiatric treatment at some time in his life—think of that: one in four! One in four adults lived quite alone, though only a minority actually wished to. Crime of every sort increased. Even in country villages every one had to keep his doors locked. In short, if these people believed themselves to be happy or at peace with themselves, they were simply wrong. Rock music expressed the mood of the times: neurotic, chaotic, noisy, garish and sub-standard. It was

the musical expression of the times. If people had to persuade themselves they enjoyed it, it is because they had to persuade themselves they enjoyed their lives—or at least could enjoy them. There is a perversity in the soul. We can persuade ourselves that we love the things we most hate. We can transform the very intensity of our abhorrence into a sort of neurotic adoration. That, I think, accounts for the cult of rock music. That is why so few people want that era back now we are free of it. There is very little of what used to be called 'nostalgia';—and those few people who do look back with longing to those times—who still listen to rock music—I think they are rather dangerous people, for theirs is a longing for chaos and darkness. Not a clinging to the darkness out of despair and emptiness as it was at the time, but a veritable passion for all that is tenebrous and perverse."

"Yes; look at the Democratic League who assassinated the Home Secretary last year." Simon Carlyle, a young man in a dove-pale silk brocade waistcoat found courage to address the great man.

"I fear I do not read the newspapers," said Mr. Carman.

"Very strange people," said Mr. Carlyle. "They listen to that music—they are a sort of nihilists who hate the new civilisation and want to bomb the world back into the chaos of the late 20th century. Quite fanatical; full of a sort of desolate hatred, I should say."

"Well, yes," said Robert Carman. "I suppose they are an extreme example of what I am speaking about—although, of course, the members of such subversive societies are usually only catspaws directed by colder minds. Nonetheless that dark, hollow passion, that strange, mindless preference for ugliness over beauty, chaos over order, the low and dirty over the high and pure—it is all one with the music and the whole ethos of that era: the pull of the abyss."

"It is very curious that you should say that today," said Simon Carlyle, emboldened by the vitality with which Mr. Carman had taken up the subject which he had introduced, "for I have seen something in today's newspaper which afforded me a *frisson* of precisely that dark mystery associated with the things of the latter part of the past century." Charles de Marechal shifted uneasily. He did not approve of newspapers and he knew that Mr. Carman did not either. The young man continued unconscious of the tremor he had caused. "A man with compact discs in his pocket—you will no doubt remember compact discs, sir—of music by an orchestra known as Bill Cretin and the Morons—"

Mr. de Marechal was about to interrupt but

Carlyle talked on rapidly: "He was found dead in the foggy streets of Hampstead in the small hours of this morning, shot through the heart."

"How very *piquant*," said Mr. Carman. "The dark mystery of the world of Sherlock Holmes closing in and reclaiming that diseased Baroque which flooded the world after the hansom cabs left it. Yes, there is a genius in that; an art in the workings of fate."

Simon Carlyle was obviously pleased. He dipped into his pocket and brought out a shilling newspaper, all crisp Art-Nouveau typesetting with coloured drawings and photographs in sharp Art-Nouveau borders. To de Marechal it was anathema, but Mr. Carman, while he disliked it, also loved it as the product of a sane world. It is a happy man who can glory even in the things he dislikes.

"I have the story here," said the young man, turning the pages and passing the paper to the great man. The small page was half-filled by a photograph—in the usual decorative frame—of the dead man lying on the pavement. White fog obliterated the distance, but the man's face was quite clear. An odd, unforgettable face, with protuberant lips and an air at once of jaded debauchery and, incongruously, of a scrupulous suburban propriety which was very 21st-century. He reminded Mimsy Crystal of a man she once met who had been released from an insane asylum cured. There was a calmness and respectability about him which always seemed brittle and precarious. A peculiar scar ran from the temple almost to the nose. It certainly seemed to bear out Mr. Carman's belief that those who held on to rock music were a strange species of humanity. Above the photograph was the headline:

Man Shot Dead in Hampstead

and below it the caption "The unidentified man depicted above was shot in the early hours of this morning. Police arrived only seconds too late to apprehend the assailant."

There ensued a long silence in which Mr. Carman stared at the newspaper with a very strange expression on his face. De Marechal was terrified lest the eminent guest should have been offended in his house by the introduction of this piece of cheap journalism, but at last Mimsy's grandfather said slowly: "I—I knew this man."

"I say, I'm sorry," said the owner of the newspaper. "Friend of yours?"

"Do you imagine I make friends with the sort of person who could carry that filth in his pockets? No, I only knew him slightly. But I can tell you all the same that this has shaken me. You see, he was already dead."

"I say," said Mimsy Crystal, "are you sure you are not just building up the jolly old Sher-

lock Holmes atmosphere?"

"By no means, my dear. I assure you, this picture gave me a considerable shock. It was like a strange repetition of history; you see, this is just how I learned of his death before. I saw his picture in a paper, just like this one, only in that picture he was hanged—hanged in his hotel room. The papers called it suicide. It wasn't in London, though. It was in Cambridge, last year. I had been introduced to him at a party—his name was Jaggard or something—I don't think we exchanged more than a few dozen words. Some one showed me the paper about a week later. I never read them myself."

"Are you sure he was the same man?" asked Mimsy Crystal.

"No doubt of it. It is hardly a face one could mistake."

"A double, perhaps, or a twin brother?"

"Hardly: remember the scar. Is it likely that two men should so closely resemble each other—such an unusual face, too—and have exactly the same shaped scar in the same place?"

"I say!" said the young man of the newspaper. "This is obviously a case for Miss Crystal to solve. She is the new Sherlock Holmes after all."

All eyes turned upon Mimsy Crystal. She enjoyed the sudden attention of this glittering aesthetic company. She knew them all a little, for she considered herself a poetess living on the outskirts of Bohemia;—at least, she did in some moods. They saw her as pleasant if somewhat nondescript: considerably richer than they and always good for a few shillings to a fellow-artist in need. Unlike them, she was very much like an ordinary girl of her time in dress and manner, though this may have been as much because of her vagueness as anything else. She seemed almost too dreamy and abstracted to affect a conscious style. Her face was pretty but somewhat bland and her conversation often childish. Those who did not know her often took her for a dull, rather stupid creature, but she had periods of surprising animation and perceptiveness when something sparked her off. The main thing which saved her from being written off as a dullard, however, was her reputation as an amateur detective. Her solution of the curious case involving the hair of the celebrated dolly-singer, Miss Lydia l'Ange had brought her to public notice as a penetrating mind with a penchant for the bizarre and the poignant.

"Well," said one of the Mediaeval ladies—Eleanor Lowell by name; a fair girl with a style of speech at once languorous and meticulously correct. "Do you think you can solve the case while the official police are baffled?"

"Edgar Allan Poe," said Miss Prudence Winter—a raven-haired child with a Burne-

Jones profile—"once solved a French murder case just from reading accounts of it in the American newspapers."

Mimsy Crystal felt a little nervous. Were they making a butt of her? She looked at her grandfather who smiled gently. The room seemed alive with fresh-hearted enthusiasm. These people were living up to their theories and to her grandfather's theories.

"So, you are putting me on my mettle," said Mimsy Crystal: "you want me to solve the case from the newspaper accounts."

"Oh, not putting you on your mettle," said Miss Lowell. "That would be too dreadful of us."

"And I hardly think," said M. de Marechal, "that Miss Crystal should be confined by the newspaper accounts. They are very sketchy."

"But if you could throw any light on this exquisite mystery—"

"We could be your Baker Street Irregulars and help you in any way that you desired."

The spiritual temperature of the room seemed to rise. The young Bohemians wished to throw themselves into this new adventure: to taste it to the full rather than holding back with that bourgeois reserve which dares taste life only at second hand and must always maintain a buffer of protective skepticism between itself and the world.

"If you could tell us," said Miss Lowell, "how your mind approaches the case: the way you plunge your fingers into the intricate darkness of the mystery and begin to unravel its threads."

"I should prefer," said Mimsy Crystal, "to make a little preliminary exploration first. It would make me self-conscious to lay bare my thoughts as I went along: and perhaps, if I fail to solve it, you will bear with me if I keep my poor unsuccessful hypotheses to myself—as you no doubt destroy your failed poems in silence and in darkness."

There was a murmur of approval. Such privacy was the right of any artist.

"On the other hand, should I succeed, I promise I shall explain my thoughts in detail. An explanation after the event adds to the effect. Before the event—well, detective work, taken as an art is not unrelated to the art of conjuring. If one sees the mechanism, the performance is spoiled."

"Yet conjuring is an empty art," said Miss Winters, "its effects are deception. The rabbit created was there all along: while the detective produces real solutions to mysteries that had hitherto been closed."

"Who shall say that conjuring is an empty art?" said Robert Carman. "All art is illusion: illusion which conveys truth. Conjuring is a minor art: yet its effect, like the effect of all

art, is that produced in the heart of the participant: its effect is of the graceful ease of creation, disappearance and transformation; the joyful, debonair *lila*; the great cosmic game of manifestation. Let Mimsy lay down her velvet cloak for a table and let us gather round to watch her effects: effects which, I am sure, will be charming whether she succeed or no."

Mimsy Crystal clapped her hands twice in the manner of some Eastern street performer commanding the attention of his audience. Her natural shyness was put aside in obedience to her grandfather's joyous call to performance. What extraordinary gaiety and vitality he had: and how sad that his spring and summer days had all been turned to winter and the spring-time of his life come not until the leaves were sear.

"Very well," said Mimsy Crystal: "Irregulars, send out your maid for a copy of the evening edition, and give her a shilling if she can bring it within ten minutes." The neat, quiet maidservant, used to dramatic instructions curiously phrased, set out on her quest. "Grandfather, I should like to begin by asking you a few questions."

"By all means, my child."

"You say that you spoke to this man, this victim of two deaths. What impression did you form of him?"

"He seemed withdrawn, very nervous—one sometimes takes an instant dislike to a man: I did to him. Of course, at the time I did not know that he was contaminating himself with late 20th century poison, but it did not surprise me. He had something of the looseness of the late 20th century about him. Of course he was not as dreadful as a real late-20th-century person—he could not have that absolute never-known-anything-else ghastliness that hung like a fetid miasma over those times, affecting the nicest people almost as much as the worst. Nobody can have that now—it took a whole diseased society to create that. What he did have was a sort of hollowness which was reminiscent of those times; a looseness which was reminiscent yet—yet—"

"Yet in a way worse for being wilful rather than conditioned," interposed Mimsy Crystal.

"Well, no. Not exactly that. That is what made me hesitate. There was an element of that, of course. But when I try to analyse the exact nuance of feeling that I had from him—and I have tried to analyse it on several occasions, because the case rather fascinated me—I find myself unsure of how far it was willed. He seemed as much a victim as a deliberate pervert. Not like the unconscious victims of the late 20th century, of course: it was more willed than that, more conscious than that, yet in his own way he seemed as lost as they were—and

lost in a colder, lonelier sort of way. He made me think of a man who had sold his soul. And at the same time there was a half-decency about him—I noticed that more with retrospect. There was an earnest seeking, like that of a man who was trying to escape from the toils that surrounded him. A childlike openness, which was rather grasping in a childish way, but probably quite genuine. Had I disliked him less I should probably have seen it more generously. That is what made me feel so terrible afterwards. I should have seen it at the time, but all I saw was his looseness and his selfish, pushing manner which seemed to demand my attention. I later came to wonder whether he had not indeed been trying to escape the terrible psychological web in which he had become entangled, and that, since I had not helped him, had sought escape in another and darker form. You see, he seemed quite anxious to meet me. A lot of people are, of course, now that I have become rather famous after a lifetime of obscurity; but I do not think it was that. He said: 'Mr Carman, I have read your *Re-mythologisation of Life*. The chapter on love explains everything.' He looked at me as if he expected me to say or do something; as if he wanted something of me—wanted it desperately. I did not know how to respond. I know my books have had a very profound effect on a lot of people. You would be surprised at the people who approach me, regarding me almost as a sort of priest or prophet. Some of them I think I have been able to help."

"You have, after all, changed the thinking and assumptions of a generation," said de Marechal.

"You are too kind. I merely found myself in the right place at the right time after a lifetime of living in the wrong place at the wrong time. But you will appreciate that this man's approach and his expectations—whatever they were—were not as strange to me as they would have been to some one else. Still, I did not know what to do. He repelled me, bringing with him a breath of the days which are gone. He fixed me with a stare that was hardly sane, and when I excused myself he looked quite stricken. Perhaps he tried to draw me back, but I made for some people I knew at the other side of the room. It has troubled me ever since, for when I saw that photograph of him a few days later, I wondered whether, if I had acted differently, he might not be alive today."

"And you are sure he was dead—on that occasion."

"There can be little doubt of it. The newspaper said that he had been examined by two doctors—one civilian and one police—and that both concluded that he had died by strangulation."

"What sort of a party was it?"

"Not at all the sort of party at which you would expect to find a man like that. It was an *avant garde* party. People not unlike you chaps here, though mostly a bit older. You would not expect to meet any one who would listen to that type of music."

"Though perhaps the occasional chap who reads newspapers?" said Mr. de Marechal. Mr. Carlyle coloured noticeably.

"You say this man was nervous," continued Mimsy Crystal. "Would you say he was depressed?"

"Difficult to say on so brief an acquaintance. On the whole I would say not: though one really cannot tell. The people who commit suicide are often the people no one would have expected to do it."

"Would you say he was frightened?"

"Frightened? He may have been. He was certainly excessively nervous and there was an urgency about him."

At this point the young maidservant re-entered the room. She still had on her outdoor coat, being impressed by the urgency of delivering the newspaper at the earliest moment. She stood silently awaiting instructions.

"Ah, the newspaper," said Mimsy Crystal. The maidservant gave it to her with an expression of mild relief. Her master did not like newspapers and she had come to regard them as something vaguely unclean. It seemed strange to be bringing one into the house.

Mimsy Crystal found the latest news of the murder on an inside page and read it aloud:

Victim of Hampstead Murder Identified

In the fog-shrouded streets of Hampstead, early this morning, in the hours between darkness and day, a man was done to death by the hand of an unknown assailant who has vanished into the night. The body was found in Gayton Road by a tram conductor going off duty.

The victim has now been identified by the police as Mr. Colin Whybrow of Penistone Road, Streatham. Mr. Whybrow, a clerk at the English and Imperial Bank, leaves a wife, Julia, and two-month-old daughter Carman.

The motive for this assassination is unknown. Mr. Whybrow was not, according to his wife, carrying any significant amount of money, nor had he, as far as she is able to tell, any enemies.

One curious circumstance relating to the case is the presence of two "compact" or laser-read discs in the dead man's pocket containing music played by a late-20th-century dance orchestra known as "Bill Cretin and the Morons". Mrs. Whybrow is unable to account for these, as her husband did not have a taste for music of this sort and did not possess any

such discs. Inspector Sutherland of Scotland Yard, asked whether the musical discs may be a clue to the murder, said that the police are investigating every possibility.

Inspector Sutherland has appealed to any one who may have been in the vicinity of Hampstead High Street and Gayton Road between two o'clock and half past three this morning to communicate with Scotland Yard or with his local police station.

Mimsy Crystal lowered the paper and sat for some minutes in silent contemplation, her wide, grey eyes open but unseeing. At last she turned to Robert Carman.

"Have you a copy of the original newspaper article, grandfather?—the one which reported the suicide?"

"Yes, I have kept it among my papers. The thing always worried me."

"Do you think I could see it?"

"Certainly. Mr. de Marechal, may I use your telephone?"

"But of course."

Robert Carmen picked up the heavy, white Ivorite receiver. "Robert Carman, St. John Street, Oxford." The computer connected him immediately with his own house. "Hello Douglas. Could you look in the blue file and find a cutting from a newspaper about a suicide. You can't miss it, it is the only bit of newspaper there." There was a pause of a minute or so.

"Good man. Could you let me see it." The machine clicked and a piece of quarto paper dropped into the flat rosewood tray of the telephone stand. He opened the tray and gave the paper to Mimsy Crystal. It bore a copy of the article:

Suicide in Cambridge

by Ian Ferguson

The peace and propriety of our second University town was overshadowed today by a grim event. Mr. Keith Jaggard was found hanged in his one-roomed flat in Glisson Road.

Mr. Jaggard was unmarried and unemployed, having discontinued his studies at Kings College without sitting for a degree. He had never undertaken gainful employment in any form. His room was covered with posters depicting "rock" (dance-band) singers and guitar-players of the late 20th century and was dominated by an extensive, though unsystematic, collection of early laser-records of their music. A police spokesman said:—"It was a bit eerie: rather like stepping into another age."

Mr. Jaggard left no suicide note and no reason is known why he should have taken his own life, except that it would appear to have been a solitary and unsuccessful one. The body has been examined by a police surgeon and by Mr. Jaggard's own physician. Both are agreed that death was caused by strangulation. The police have ruled out foul play and it is clear that Mr. Jaggard died by his own hand.

The two photographic articles were passed round the room and every one agreed that either the pictures showed the same man or that the resemblance bordered upon the uncanny.

"Can you make anything of this, Miss Crystal?" asked Miss Winter. "The mystery seems to defy all penetration. Whichever way one turns one meets a fresh conundrum."

"Can I make anything of it? Yes, I believe I can. I believe that the solution is already beginning to take shape in my mind. Of course, I cannot be sure. It may be no more than an extravagant guess—"

"Perhaps we should do some field-work," suggested Charles de Marechal: "visit the scene of the crime or something of that sort. Perhaps we should interview the police."

"I do not think the scene of the crime would help us much, nor yet the police; but I should like to have a word with Mrs. Whybrow to clarify a few points. That done, and if my theory receives further support, I think we may act."

"How thrilling," said Miss Lowell. "Can you not give us a hint as to what you have deduced?"

"Let you look behind my conjurer's table? Certainly not. See if you can work it out for yourself. If not, prepare yourself for a surprise to-morrow morning."

"May any of us escort you to your interview with Mrs. Jaggard—I mean, Mrs. Whybrow?" asked M. de Marechal. "Of course we would not venture to be present at the interview itself."

"I should be more than grateful if you, Mr. de Marechal, and my grandfather, would accompany me; nor have I any objection to your presence at the interview. In fact I think it might help matters. But before we leave, may I borrow your tellie?"

"By all means."

Mimsy Crystal picked up the white Art-Neo Receiver. "Mimosa Crystal, Broad Street, Oxford. Hello, Nanny. Could you do something for me? Yes, another investigation. Could you look up the newspapers for April 10th, 2024. Look for the suicide of Mr. Keith Jaggard. We already have the *Morning Post*. I want to see what the other papers say about it: do they give any details the *Post* omits? Jolly-ho."

Mrs. Whybrow was a surprise to both Robert Carman and Charles de Marechal. She was not a surprise to Mimsy Crystal, who found her much as she might have expected. She was a small, neat woman, utterly the opposite of the late, late Mr. Jaggard; utterly a girl of the mid-2020s. Everything about her was crisp and precise. Her tailored jacket was spotless, her hair black, and bobbed with such excruciating neatness that it might have been painted on, her skirt crisply pleated, her stocking-seams die-straight, her cupid's-bow lips, and pencilled eyebrows, even in the extremity of her grief drawn with immaculate precision. And she was in the extremity of grief. That was quite clear, even though she did not permit herself any conscious shew of it.

"Who are you? Reporters?"

"No," said Mimsy Crystal gently. "Do we look like reporters?"

The curious trio could hardly have looked less like reporters: the tall, aesthetic young man with the pointed beard and the silk tie; the vague, childlike girl and the distinguished-looking white-haired gentlemen with the clear, kind, wonderfully intelligent eyes.

"What do you want, then?"

"We think," said Mimsy Crystal, "that we may be able to bring your husband's murderer—or murderers—to justice."

"Justice," said Mrs. Whybrow bitterly, "What good is justice? Will that bring him back?" She seemed about to close the door in their faces.

"One moment, Mrs. Whybrow," said Mr. Carman, "my name is Robert Carman. I met your husband once—at least I think I did—and—"

"Robert Carman?" said the widow. Her whole manner changed.

"Yes."

"My husband thought a great deal of you, Mr. Carman. Our daughter is named for you. He said you saved his life. Your philosophy, I mean. I did not know he had ever met you."

She shewed them into her parlour. It was tiny but immaculate: everything stylish, up-to-the-minute Art Neo. She was fearlessly house-proud; in fact there seemed a certain rigidity about her whole personality. She was not greatly attractive: not the sort of girl most men would look twice at, despite her smart clothes: yet seeing her in her sanctuary with her baby, one sensed a depth of tenderness which few outsiders had ever seen. The warmth beneath her cold and somewhat brittle exterior had been brought out by her marriage, and now was in danger of burying itself again and for ever.

"This is my grand-daughter, Mrs. Whybrow," said Robert Carman. "I should be more than grateful if you would be so kind as to answer one or two questions which she wishes to ask you."

"Your husband has been struck down by a dark and terrible blow, Mrs. Whybrow," said Mimsy Crystal. "I wish to protect others from that blow: to protect good, decent, upright people like you. I know it is hard to care for protecting others when one has been so bitter-



ly hurt oneself; yet that, I suppose is what my grandfather has done. He has lived most of his life in a world which was scarcely bearable to him, yet he devoted his life to the work of making possible—intellectually possible—a decent world for others: for you and me, Mrs. Whybrow, and for your husband, God rest him."

"Yes," said Mrs. Whybrow, "you are right. Ask me your questions and I will answer them as best I may."

"How long have you been married?"

"Just over a year."

"When did you first meet your husband?"

"About six months before we were married."

"Where was that?"

"In Cambridge. I was working there as a librarian."

"What was Mr. Whybrow doing at that time?"

"He had lost his job."

"What was his job?"

"He was a Civil Servant."

"How did he lose it?"

"He was accused of stealing."

"Did he steal?"

"I have never been sure. I think so."

"And yet he later obtained employment at a bank?"

"Yes. I suppose they were prepared to give him another chance."

"How did your husband dress?"

"He was very neat; very proud of his appearance. He wasn't good looking, I can't pretend he was, but he was always splendidly turned-out."

"Always?"

"Always. Except for a short period after he lost the job. That demoralised him terribly. He let himself go for a while then. That was when I met him."

"How did you meet him?"

"He came to the library. The first time I saw him was about three weeks after I started there."

"Did you notice him particularly on that first occasion?"

"Oh yes. He looked so strange—and he behaved so strangely. He came up to my counter to take out some books; but instead of presenting them he just stood and stared at me for—oh, for ages. Then he went back and returned his books to the shelves and left the library empty-handed."

"Did he ever explain this action to you later?"

"No, never."

"You say he looked strange. In what way?"

"He was very badly dressed and probably rather dirty, and his face had a very queer, loose expression—a bit like the people in

those old programmes they used to show sometimes when television was going."

"So it was not love at first sight?"

"Not for me. I did not think some one like that should be allowed in the library. I said so to the head librarian. She agreed, but she said that as he was not actually wearing shorts or a tee-shirt or other indecent clothes, we could not stop him."

"But your feelings changed. Why?"

"Well, he changed. The next time he came—about a week later—he was much better dressed. Not well dressed, exactly, but much better and—well, he looked so lost. He came to me and asked if I could recommend a book about love. At first I thought it was some sort of fly-line, if you will excuse the slang, but he seemed quite serious. He said he wanted to learn about love—romantic love—he needed to understand it. He asked so naively, just like a child—yet obviously intelligent—so I recommended Mr. Carman's chapter on love in *The Remythologisation of Life*. I had just been reading that myself and it is so beautiful and profound. I think it tells one all one needs to know." She turned her shining eyes upon Robert Carman.

"You are very kind," he said.

"A few days later, he came back. He was looking much better—much more himself. He thanked me for recommending the book. He said it had helped him more than I could possibly know. Then he asked if I could recommend some poetry. He was so frank and trusting. I wrote a little list for him. Some Elizabethans, (I mean first Elizabethans, of course!) some Tennyson, and some Troubridge for modern. All rather romantic. I think that is what he wanted. He had never read poetry before—think of that! I suppose the Civil Service is a bit dry."

"After that he came to me regularly. I recommended things, wrote him little lists. Sometimes he wrote his thoughts about what he was reading to show me. Little essays almost. He tried to discuss literature over the counter, but of course one cannot really do that—so we started meeting at lunchtimes and then in the evenings. Just to discuss the things it was too hard to discuss over the counter. That is how it developed."

"And he continued to improve in his appearance?"

"His appearance, his manner and everything. You have no idea how demoralised he was after losing his job. He had gone about as far down-hill as a man can go. If you had seen him the first day—why most of the tramps who try to sleep in the reading-room look more respectable than he did. He was not actually rude to any one in the library, but his

whole manner was somehow offensive. By the time we were meeting regularly, he was a neat, charming, if rather *gauche* and painfully shy young man."

"To your knowledge, did he ever use a name other than Whybrow?"

"Of course not."

"Was Whybrow the name on his library ticket?"

"There were no names on the library tickets; only the computer could identify the tickets."

"So you would say that he turned from something of a wreck into a stable young man?"

"Eventually, yes. But he was never really stable in Cambridge. He dressed better and his manner improved, but he was excessively nervous. Pathologically nervous and often gloomy."

"Did he offer any reason?"

"He said Cambridge depressed him. He said he had made a mess of his life and wanted to start again. In the end he persuaded me to marry him and come to London. He said he would take a new job and cast off his gloom and nervousness. He said I would never regret it. He was as good as his word. I never did regret it—until today." She seemed about to burst into tears.

"Please Mrs. Whybrow, I know this must be painful, but you are helping more than you can know. Can you tell me, what were your husband's beliefs about love?"

"They were deeply influenced by Mr. Carman. He told me that he had never believed in romantic love before he met me. He had believed that two minds could never really communicate—that each was perpetually locked up in its own subjectivity and love was merely an illusion. The first day he saw me he fell in love and it turned his world upside-down. Then he read your book and came to believe that romantic love is the enactment of the fundamental creativity cosmic manifestation, of the Divine eros. He believed that in the loved one we see a true Archetype, manifested, however imperfectly, upon the material world. That far from an illusion, it is the profoundest reality, a ritual realisation of the highest truth—oh, I am not putting it well, but I hardly need to explain it to you, do I?"

"What do you make of those discs found on your husband's body?"

"I don't know. I have told the police: he never had anything like that."

"Did he have any particular views on music of that kind?"

"Yes, he said it was a blasphemy against love and harmony and all the things he had come to believe in."

"I confess," said Mr. de MAREchal, as he handed Mimsy Crystal over the wide running-boards of a stately black London taxi-cab, "that every turn of this plot leaves me more puzzled than before."

"Indeed," said Robert Carman, as they settled into the deep leather upholstery. "Are your theories shattered or confirmed, or what?"

"Confirmed, clarified and amplified," said Mimsy Crystal. "I am tempted to say that the case is quite elementary, but I shall not. I am tempted to pursue my intended course without consulting Nanny, but that would be *hubris*. It is just possible that she will have found something which will reduce my thesis to shreds."

Mimsy Crystal unhooked the heavy, black, horn-shaped receiver from the panel behind the door of the taxi and put a threepenny piece into the brass slot. "Mimosa Crystal, Broad Street, Oxford. Hello, Nanny, darling. What have you found. Really? No, I am not surprised. It may seem queer, but it is rather what I expected. Goodbye, dear."

"I take it your thesis is not in shreds," said her grandfather.

"Far from it. We have one more visit to make and then we may dismiss the case from our minds until to-morrow morning."

Early rising was not one of the weaknesses of the Bohemian circle which gathered at the garret, but the lure of the exquisite mystery brought the gathering of last night—together with some others who had heard about it—together at the ungodly hour of eight o'clock in the morning; and since dressing, among these people, was an art in itself, all must have arisen at least an hour earlier. By twenty past eight o'clock, they were all foregathered.

Mr. de MAREchal had told the story of the interview with Mrs. Whybrow in detail the previous night and various conjectures had been put forward. No one, however, had managed to construct even a tentatively possible explanation of the mystery. Mimsy Crystal had seemed absurdly confident, and had promised a "surprise" in the morning. That alone would have been enough to bring these fastidious young people into the rude morning air, but there was something more: a new development which, perhaps, had left even Mimsy Crystal behind. Mr. Simon Carlyle had read the *Morning Post*, and the remarkable news had spread rapidly, creating an electrical *frisson* which exceeded all that had gone before.

At twenty-five past eight, Mimsy Crystal arrived. She smiled upon the company. The "bite" of the case gave her a confidence and charm which she usually lacked. "You look so very fresh and delightful, all of you," she

said. "You cannot have got up, you must have stayed up."

"I suppose you have seen that dreadful newspaper," said Mr. de Marechal.

"Oh no," said Mimsy Crystal, "I never read newspapers. They are so terribly unreliable."

"But they have their uses. You have heard?"

"Newspapers have their uses, though reading them is not one of them. Have I heard that the corpse from Hampstead High Street has made a dramatic recovery? That the rumours of his death were greatly exaggerated? That he was snatched from the mortuary slab and now lies, faintly breathing, in a hospital bed and is expected to recover consciousness later this morning. Certainly I have heard all that."

"Does this fit in with your theory?" asked Miss Winter.

"Yes and no," said Mimsy Crystal.

"What do you mean?" asked Miss Lowell, "You are teasing us. You know the truth, I can tell you do. It all begins to make a faint sense now. There is something utterly strange about this man, is there not? He did not really die the first time or the second time. Can he die? What sort of creature is he?"

"Merely a man," said Mimsy Crystal. "A man who made a mistake and paid for it with his life."

"With his life," said Miss Winter, "but—"

"Mr. de Marechal," said Mimsy Crystal, "would you be so kind as to do a thing which I fancy has not been done before in this house. Would you be so kind as to turn on the wireless for the half-past-eight news."

Mr. de Marechal tued on the dark, cathedral-like Art-Neo wireless set. A golden glow awoke behind its latticed front and the chimes of Big Ben were heard. The precise, formal, utterly correct voice of the news announcer began with the great events of the day: the investiture of the first governor-general of a new African colony, the threatened secession of Serbia from the diminishing rump of the European Federation, the reversion of Somerville, the last mixed college at Oxford, to its original ladies-only status. Then:

"There has been a startling development in the investigation of a murder case in Hampstead. Ten minutes ago, two armed men burst into a private ward at the Hampstead Free Hospital and were arrested by a party of police constables, together with officers of the Imperial Guard, who were laying in wait for them.

"It would appear that the assailants believed that the victim of the murder which took place yesterday had recovered and was in the hospital as a result of a false story published in *Morning Post*. The police state that they had no part in the planting of the story, which appears to have been arranged between the

Morning Post reporter Mr. Ian Ferguson and Miss Mimosa Crystal of Oxford who has previously come to the attention of the public in connexion with a case involving the well-known dolly-singer, Miss Lydia l'Ange.

Inspector James Sutherland of Scotland Yard, who is in charge of the case, said that, acting on information received from Miss Crystal, he arranged for the constables to be present at the hospital, in the ward mentioned in the newspaper. The two men have been charged with murder and conspiracy. Inspector Sutherland has said that the case may have wider implications than were at first apparent, and that the arrest today may be the first step toward tracing the murderers of the late Home Secretary, Mr. Joseph McKinnon in April of last year."

Mimsy Crystal turned off the wireless set. "I told you the newspapers were unreliable," she said.

A dazed silence settled upon the room, which was broken at last by Miss Lowell.

"Please, O conjurer, unveil your secrets. You have turned us about until we are dazed and mystified. We have heard the conclusion of the story and still we are no wiser. Your art is perfect, now favour us with the *coup de grace*."

"You are too kind," said Mimsy Crystal. "Is my art perfect? Was not the end perhaps a shade undramatic. In a real detective story, Mr. de Marechal and my grandfather and I should have been in at the kill. Perhaps Mr. de Marechal should have been lying in the hospital bed, feigning a coma, with his service revolver concealed under the sheets."

"By no means," said Mr. de Marechal, "this was a masterpiece of subtlety. Very much your style, Miss Crystal. No 'Boys' Own' business. You speak a word here and a word there, you listen and think and open those great grey eyes of yours that hold all the world's mysteries in their childlike depths, and cause things to happen without exertion or fuss. We leave exertion to our servants and to the police."

"Mr. de Marechal, you are quite my favourite critic. You make my work sound consummate."

"It is consummate," said Miss Winter, "but please, the *coup de grace*, before we pop!"

"Very well. You asked me at the outset of the case how I should approach it; what considerations entered my mind; by what threads I first began to unravel the mystery. I shall now answer your question."

"We were faced, you will all agree, with an apparent paradox. A man appeared to have been killed who, it seemed, was already dead. There may have been some supernatural explanation: some curious means by which the same man could live twice and die twice. I de-

cided to put aside that possibility for the time being. If the supernatural is excluded, then we are compelled to the conclusion that what has apparently happened has not in fact happened—the same man has not died twice. What, then, are the possibilities? Either that there was a second man who greatly resembled the first—and considering the scar, it is most probable that he has been deliberately made to resemble the first—or that there was only one man, in which case he did not really die on the first occasion.

"Of these two possibilities, the second seemed to me the more probable, so I began to consider that. Was it really a possibility? We have the evidence of two doctors, one of them a police doctor, as to his death. It seems unlikely that they were both deceived or that they were colluding: and in any case, what was the motive for the entire affair? By the time my grandfather had told his story an hypothesis had suggested itself to me—the only one which I could devise which accounted for all the facts. The interview with Mrs. Whybrow confirmed much of what I suspected and filled in much of the detail. I was still dealing, to a large extent, in psychological probabilities, but the experiment with the police has shewn that I was correct at least in the major points of my thesis.

"Having said this much, perhaps I may be permitted to tell the story of Mr. Jaggard as I understand it.

"Mr. Keith Jaggard was a malcontent. Why, I cannot say. I rather suspect that his parents were late 20th century types of the worst stamp: the sort who would not move with the times, and that young Keith was brought up with a handful of the propaganda of that era. This is pure conjecture, of course: but however that may be, he was one of those oddities who cling to the sloppiness and nastiness of that era and make a cult of its dress and music. He was essentially lazy. He went to a modern school which, by the use of modern disciplinary methods, induced him to work hard and gain a place at Kings. He probably resented the discipline bitterly. Perhaps that helped to bring out the very nasty streak which later emerged in his character. Once in the less disciplined domain of the university, he stopped working and indulged his odd tastes to the full.

"At some point; probably after leaving the University in dishonour, he became involved with modernist subversives, and eventually took the ultimate step of joining the Democratic League—it may have been some similar organisation, we are not yet certain, but let us suppose it was the Democratic League, which is most probable. Whether he was involved in bombings or assassinations we do not know, at the very least he must have been an acces-

sory before and after various facts. The Democratic League is not a talking-shop; it is a tight-knit collection of desperate, hard-core terrorists. So, for some time, he led the life of a League member. Playing his soul-rotting music in a little one-roomed flat. Redeemed from the thought that his life was an utter failure by knowing that he was one of the few, among the demi-monde of backward-looking malcontents in which he moved, who had gone all the way and were not just talking subversives but bombing and killing.

"So far, so good; at least from the topsy-turvy perspective of the late Mr. Keith Jaggard. But then something happened. Something quite unexpected. One day, in the library he saw a girl and his heart did something which overthrew his whole philosophy. He fell in love. Love at first sight—traditional romantic nonsense. And with whom? With a girl who was clearly the very reverse of everything he imagined he believed in.

"I was reminded of something you said yesterday, Grandfather, when we were talking about whether late 20th century people really enjoyed the things of that era. You said that there is a perversity in the soul and that one can persuade oneself that one loves the things one most hates. I think you said that we can transform the very intensity of our abhorrence into a sort of neurotic adoration. I suppose that is often true of one who clings to things which are hateful. In the late 20th century nearly every one did it. Now only a few people do it, but those few do exist. People who, under some pressure or perversity, learn to invert their most fundamental feelings. You told me once about an army officer in the late 20th century who said that the very scruffiest recruits, the ones with the longest hair and who had succumbed to the whole cult of Elizabethan casualness, were precisely the ones who became the smartest, proudest soldiers. Then, of course, a person who had inverted himself was unlikely ever to recover. All the pressure of the late 20th century was pressing him to remain inverted. In certain circumstances—for example, if he joined the army—one aspect of his inversion might dramatically right itself, but it would only be one aspect. Today it is very different. There are so many things which remind an inverted person of his true nature, and when one of them goes 'click', he is likely to revert to normality in every respect. Mr. Jaggard was like that. When he saw the future Mrs. Whybrow, he suddenly realised that his whole life up to now had been an inversion. That he believed passionately in the romantic love which he had sneered at—perhaps because his personal unattractiveness had led him to believe that he could never have it. This

question of romantic love, is, of course, quite close to the centre of the difference between the normal point of view—at least in western Christendom—and that of the late 20th century. Not only did he fall in love, but he fell in love with a girl who represented the modern style in its most advanced form—not advanced in our sense, of course, but in the sense of the up-to-the-minute main-stream. He realised that what he really wanted was not only love, but order and strictness, neatness and stylish precision. He wanted to be part of the new world, not to be destroying it. Whether he realised all of this at once, of course, we cannot know. But we do know that whatever books he was taking out of the library—probably books about Elizabethan dance bands, or some sort of subversion—he took them back to the shelves again rather than let this girl see them.

"We know what happened to the young couple from then on. Their friendship blossomed. Mr. Jaggard improved himself in every direction. He spun an elaborate yarn about his past life, and gave himself a new identity; but he was nervous, very nervous, and often gloomy. And why should he not be? The Democratic League is not a social club from which one can simply resign. One knows too much; one has seen too much and done too much. Perhaps Mr. Jaggard even knew who had assassinated the Home Secretary. Certainly he could put the police very closely onto his trail. As soon as the League knew that he had deserted the cause, his life would not be worth a bent sixpence. I suspect he led a double life: continuing to dress, speak and act as he had before except when meeting his sweetheart.

"He formed a plan. It was the obvious one: to leave Cambridge, go to the big city and start a new life under the name of Whybrow. But he could not just do that. The Democratic League would trace him and kill him. He had to do something which would make them stop looking for him, and only one thing would make them do that:—the belief that he was already dead. So he arranged his own suicide.

"Some of you may feel that this story was rather conjectural when I first formed it in my mind. After all, there are many reasons for which a man might wish to feign death and begin a new life. Why should I fix upon the Democratic League or some similar organisation? I should explain that my method is inductive rather than strictly deductive. I try to form an hypothesis which fits all the facts and then test it; but there were good reasons for this particular hypothesis, though I grant you that I made one important assumption. I assumed that the two 'deaths' were not merely coincidental: that they were somehow connected one with another. This seemed to me far

more likely than the possibility that a man who had feigned suicide one year should happen, by pure coincidence, to be murdered the next. If this was the case, then it would seem likely that his feigned suicide was an attempt to escape some murderous person or organisation. It also seemed likely that Mr. Jaggard's strange way of life had some bearing on the case, especially in view of the fact that persons of Mr. Jaggard's type are disliked and distrusted by organised criminals as much as by any one else, and that he was, therefore, not likely to be involved with such people. The only criminal connexions likely for a man like Mr. Jaggard, at least of the sort who might conceivably go as far as premeditated murder, would be of the political-atavist fringe, such as the Democratic League."

"But, as you asked before," said Miss Winter, "how could he convince two doctors to certify his death—one of them a police doctor?"

"He could not and he did not. What he did was rather ironic. The late 20th century was a world based upon propaganda. All its attitudes, its manners, its beliefs, its very being, were by-products of a vast system of information, misinformation and indoctrination which was collectively termed the "media". The Democratic League—and other more serious subversive movements—are a sort of residue of that system—a ring round the bathtub of civilisation, you might say. In the late 20th century, what counted was what appeared to happen—what became part of the "media's" canon of accepted reality. A person influenced by late 20th century ideas still thinks in that way. What Mr. Jaggard did was therefore entirely natural. He did not try to suborn the medical profession or the police, he simply suborned a journalist: one Mr. Ian Ferguson of the *Morning Post*. He told Mr. Ferguson a watered-down version of his story. How deeply he had been involved with the Democratic League was, shall we say, economised. He simply told him that he had had a brief, youthful connexion with them, and now lived in fear of his life. He was in love, he wanted to get married, settle down, and live in safety. Mr. Ferguson, being a decent sort of chap, agreed to help him and filed the story with picture."

"But surely the police would have realised it was not true," said one of the newcomers.

"The police do not generally comb the papers for unverified stories. They would double their labours if they did that. It is true that Mr. Ferguson ran a risk, but not a great one. Even if discovered, the consequences would not have been too terrible for him, and the tiny retraction which the paper might or might not have seen fit to print would probably not have been seen by the Democratic League.

"And that, my children, is most of the story. Mr. Jaggard—or rather, Mr. Whybrow—came to London and lived, for a short time, a delightfully suburban life with his new bride. But eventually the Democratic League found him. How they found him, I cannot say: it may be that the perverse streak in his nature had not entirely gone and that he went to some twilight meeting-place where atavists foregather to listen to strange and obscene sounds. That may account for the discs in his pocket. If he did so he can scarcely have been sane, for to let himself be recognised among such circles, which must be small and inward-turned and must overlap with such societies as the Democratic League, would have been genuine suicide. I incline to the hypothesis that he was simply spotted by one of his erstwhile comrades—he had the disadvantage of a very distinctive face—and that the discs placed in his pocket were simply a sort of calling card from his assassins, *pour encourager les autres*. A reminder that once in the cult there is no escape.

"Of course, this was all conjecture, even after I had ascertained from Nanny that no newspaper other than the *Morning Post* had mentioned the story of the suicide—for that in itself proved nothing. Newspapers are quite erratic as to what they consider to be "news". So I paid a visit to Mr. Ferguson, armed with the two articles which we perused yesterday. He was rather taken aback. He had not expected his peccadillo to come to light, even after the Hampstead murder: after all, the "suicide" was over a year ago, and minor newspaper stories are quickly forgotten. He confirmed my thesis admirably in all the details he could supply, and I, for my part—by offering a small bribe and airing the well-worn devil's adage that one might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb—not omitting to mention the score he would chalk up if he was instrumental in cracking the Hampstead case and perhaps the assassination of the Home Secretary too—persuaded Mr. Ferguson once more to break his sacred trust of telling the truth to the jolly old *demos*—not, I imagine, for the second time."

"But how could you be sure that the Democratic League would rise to your bait—and so quickly?" asked another newcomer.

"Of that there could be no doubt. Put yourself in the position of the League. What would they be thinking? They would be putting themselves in the position of Mr. Jaggard; and what would he be thinking, were he alive this morning? He would know that the League had found him. He would no longer have the smallest doubt that they meant to kill him. His only chance for survival would be to turn King's evidence—tell the police everything so that they would hold him in protective custody and,

perhaps, with his help, destroy the Democratic League altogether. According to the *Morning Post* he was still unconscious but was expected to regain consciousness this morning. Until he regained consciousness no one would know anything about him. There would be no police guard. As soon as he regained consciousness it would be too late. Even if he could not tell all immediately he would tell enough to ensure that the police would keep him heavily guarded. Their only chance was to assassinate him this morning, which, of course, was exactly what they attempted.

"And the rest of the story you know. The moral is: never take on trust what you read in the newspapers. The victim had probably played a supporting rôle in the commission of several murders, even if he had not committed any himself. I think we need shed few tears over him. The real victim is Mrs. Whybrow. She, I understand, has agreed to take a position with my grandfather, looking after his private library. Let us hope life will treat her more kindly hereafter."

"What an exquisite piece of art," said Miss Lowell.

Mr. de Marechal rose to his feet and cried: "Hats off, gentlemen, a genius!"

RACINATION: THE ANTIDOTE

PSYCHIC poisoning is not just a figure of speech. No one can live in the late 20th century without being poisoned and damaged by it. The innocence, wholeness, integrity and sense of place which are natural to human beings are torn from us. Our faces, our voices, our smallest actions bear, to some degree, the marks of the post-1960s disease. We are not the people we should have been if the world had not gone mad. This is true even of those who have consciously resisted such poisoning all their lives.

"How dreadful!" you say. "If we are all poisoned, without exception, then is there any hope at all?" Yes, there is, because what has been done can be undone. Diseases have cures: poisons have antidotes. And for the disease of modernism a cure has been found that can not only restore us to health, but open a new world of vitality and enchantment.

It is in this last, positive, aspect of racination that the real drama, interest and excitement lie. Extensive experience with training and helping individuals away from the modern world to live inside Romantia has shown that within each individual's soul lies the personality one would have had in a saner world; that this personality exists as a full, lively and living being buried inside and beneath one's present dulled personality. The emotional and intellectual life of a traditional human being is

richer, fuller and more vivacious than a poison-ed late twentieth century inhabitant can know.

What is racination? How does it work? In our next issue we shall publish a full-scale article on the fascinating subject of racination. In the meantime if you would like to learn how you can be racinated, please ring the Romantian Embassy or write to Perfect Publications.



PHOTOPLAY

HOW TO ENJOY THE PHOTOPLAY

"WHAT a strange title for an essay!" you are probably saying. I mean, if I were telling you how to play Cluedo or make a Blonde Bombshell cocktail there might be some sense in it. You might not know how to do those things. There are still a few people who don't, I believe. But watching films, if it cannot quite be described as a talent we are born with, is certainly one we pick up without any great difficulty. It may be just a shade harder than such hobbies as lying in the sun or—well, it is hard to think of anything else that is actually easier than watching films, is it not?

Of course, you are right. You so often are. But what I really wanted to tell you about was—well, all about how we watch films in Romantia. When I say films, of course, I mean real films. We never call them old films, of course, because they are not old to us. They are the latest thing. What is old are those beastly, lurid, loose-faced films that were made in the late 20th century. Those are out of date in the worst sense of the word—reminding us of the shoddy, curling-at-the-edges, garish covers in a seedy Soho bookshop selling second-hand literature of doubtful taste and moral character. Everything about them: the shapeless hairstyles, the gormless clothes, the wit-less (and witless) dialogue, the low, loose standards of morality, charm, music and everything else, mark them out as belonging to a degenerate, fly-blown era, which for us, is dead and gone. Like some old, sickly-smelling

thing, we are nervous of touching them in case we catch something (and in this we are very wise, for the diseases of the mind are worse than those of the body). These are old films—nasty, over-ripe, over-coloured, sticky-glossed, wasp-infested old films.

New films are the crisp, silver-screen jewels which delight us in our homes and our private cinemas; the films where the women are beautiful and perfectly groomed, the men are immaculate, the music is crisp and up-to-the-minute and everything delights the eye and the ear. Films where decency and truth, kindness and honour radiate from the screen and everything is new and fresh and innocent rather than jaded and cynical and old. These are the films of our era; their spirit is the spirit of the new century. We wait breathless for each new production from our favourite stars or glory in seeing one that we have seen before, savouring the magnificent moments as a connoisseur savours the depth and subtlety of a rare wine.

THE PERFECT CINEMA

But how should we watch them? There are many considerations which can help us in our enjoyment and appreciation of the latest photoplays. The best way to watch a film is at a Romantian cinema. These are held in Romantian houses with, perhaps, a maid-servant or a junior member of the colony acting as usherette. Films may be shewn one or more evenings a month or a week and there will be the whole delightful sense of occasion which makes going to the photoplay one of life's special events; also the knowledge that one is watching in company with fellow Romantians, and the charming talks and refreshments which usually follow the shewing. In a perfect world, this is perhaps the only way one would see a photoplay; but, of course, with the civilised world so scattered one may not be able to go often to a cinema, and in any case shewings may not be frequent enough to suit all one's requirements.

The next best form of cinema is, of course, the home cinema. If you have even one Romantian friend living near, you can turn this into a tiny provincial cinema from time to time; but whether you have or not, it is part of the Cinema of the Air—the spiritual kinship which links all Romantian cinemas together. It is best to watch your photoplays on a kinematograph machine (what the natives call a "video"). Best of all, one should borrow one's films from the Imperial Cinema Club. Such films are free from any sort of Babylonian announcements, introductions, interruptions, packaging materials and so forth. Instead, they have splendid Imperial introductions and fascinating reviews which help one to understand

the films in a Romantic way and a supporting programme of cartoons and up-to-date film "shorts". Even the cases the films come in are designed in striking Art-Neo style which psychically cleanses them of the late-20th-century associations which usually cling to such things. The Imperial Cinema Club does everything possible to help one's home cinema-going to be fully a part of Romantian life.

If the film you are seeing does not come from the club, it is still better for it to be recorded rather than directly broadcast from a Babylonian transmitter (even if you have to record it from such a transmitter yourself). There are various reasons for this, most notably: 1) Such transmitters usually broadcast up-to-date films at ridiculous hours of the day. 2) A recorded film has, as it were, been taken out of the hands of the Octopus. It becomes *our* film rather than *theirs*. It also enables you to cut out any announcements or commercial interruptions—all of which inflict psychic damage upon you.

If you do not have a kinematograph, it is one gadget you should seriously think of acquiring. It is ugly and expensive, but it can be covered with a charming cloth and kept out of the way, and if you are a cinema-lover without a Romantian cinema near to you, it will make a very big difference to your life.

So much for technicalities. How else should one watch a film? Well, it ought to go without saying that one should watch it in the dark—whether or not you have an usherette with a red-filtered torch to shew you to your seat or a young lady to hold hands with. Films seen by daylight, candle-light or (worst of all) electrical light are just not the thing. If it is daytime, draw the curtains before going to the cinema. It is all part of the occasion.

The greatest problem, of course, is the screen itself (we always refer to it simply as a screen, by the bye. We never use that dreadful word that begins with t. for tummy-ache). We know one Romantic household which has a special box for projecting the films on a screen, and one very private cinema which uses real film (I mean reel film) with a proper projector. For most of us, however, the answer lies in that good old Romantian stand-by, the cloth. Drape your screen with a charming Victorian cloth or a piece of curtain material and it will be transformed into a little crystal theatre.

THE RICHES THAT ARE YOURS

Make an occasion of going to the cinema. Wear something special. Have a cocktail or some chocolates or one of those Turkish cigarettes. Remember, a film is something special. It took many talented people—real people—months to make. It cost tens of thousands of pounds (or



An un-poisoned world adores true glamour hundreds of thousands of dollars—a pound is worth about five dollars) at the very least—real pounds, not miserable, inflated late-20th-century ones. Special music has been written for it, a wardrobe mistress has chosen the latest and most exquisite fashions (unless it is a costume drama, in which case the clothes are even more elaborate). In most cases the actors and actresses have been trained for years in the correct use and pronunciation of English (even the American actors speak good English in comparison with late-20th-century English actors). Critics—even those of our own *New Cinema Review*—may dismiss a film lightly, but, of course, they are judging films by the very high standards that the studios themselves have set. Do not forget that even the slightest film represents a breathtaking array of talents, beauty, skill and charm; thousands upon thousands of man-hours (and girl-hours) concentrated into a single hour of enchantment for your entertainment and delight. We are very lucky. Up-to-date photoplays are very easy for us to see, and (even with the expense of a kinematograph machine) very cheap. There is a perverse tendency in human nature to undervalue whatever is easily obtained. If it were necessary to save up and deny ourselves other luxuries in order to see a single photoplay, we should certainly do so, and perhaps we should appreciate it more at its true value. Few kings or emperors of antiquity have commanded the labours of so many for so long merely to provide them with an evening's entertainment. In

America many picture-palaces of the 1920s are built on a scale of almost unbelievable opulence. The interior of one is modelled exactly upon the throne-room of the Imperial Palace at Peking, but is much greater in size. Such structures echo the magnitude of the works projected inside them. An up-to-date film must not be compared with a quickly-made Babylonian tummy-ache programme. It is on a different scale entirely. If riches are measured, as to some degree they must be measured, by the men and materials which are commanded to do one's bidding—to please and serve and entertain one, then we who belong to the Cinema of the Air, though we be poor exiles in a land that we love not, are, in many ways, rich indeed.

NO NEW FILM IS A BAD FILM

It may seem strange to day that no up-to-date photoplay is a bad one, but I think it is almost true. There are a few exceptions, of course, but there are very few films which are not worth watching. The plot may be weak and the subject unedifying but there is actually a certain advantage in that. In a really good film there is almost too much to watch. Enjoy the acting, certainly, but do not forget to drink in the faces, the poses, and every little item that appears on the screen—a telephone receiver, a cocktail shaker, the steering wheel of the car, the dashboard; look at the way people hold themselves; look at the crowds and the city streets. If there was nothing at all of merit in the story (which is very rarely the case) a new film is worth watching just for the refreshment and education of our senses; for the strengthening of our inner world as a world unpoisoned by the Babylonian aberration. I have known Romantians who will watch a film without the sound, the better to study facial expressions, artefacts, gesture and posture and to absorb the manifold visual wonders of a decent world. This may be going a touch far for an evening's entertainment but however fascinating the photoplay, do not forget to notice these incidentals. Let them flow into your heart like water into a drought-stricken landscape, bringing life and blossom wherever they touch.

Everything has its advantages, and one advantage of living in a world where *everything* is designed to poison you is that, entering the enchanted world of the photoplay, one can appreciate the charm and decency of *everything*. Simple decencies which meant almost nothing when they were first filmed now fall like the subtlest of delicacies upon palates refined by long fasting. The photoplay was always intended to be magical, but for us it has the fresh and deeper magic of the New Sensibility.

Just as tummy-ache programmes can poison and deracinate you, so a diet of real films

(provided you give up those dreadful poisons—for real films, to do you good, must be part of a balanced mental diet, free from toxins) can have the opposite effect, filling your heart and mind with pure images, fine gestures, healthy humour, true glamour, and a world of decent things:—shop-windows, faces, voices, vans, music, hats, gloves, tea-shops, prices, smiles, cocktail bars, trains, toys, servants, drawing-rooms, inns, policemen, telephones, children, Christmases and all the numberless myriad of good things which combine imperceptibly to make a racinated world. Every one of these things helps you to play your part in building Romantia, stocking your mind, your heart, your inner eye and your inner ear with those perceptions which are necessary to the imaginative re-construction of a sane world. In other words, the photoplay will enrich and deepen your life, not merely when you are at the cinema, but in every waking minute, and very possibly every sleeping minute too. It can help you to refine your perceptions, cleanse your imagination, shape your personality and open your heart. Romantic cinema is good for you.

OVER MY SHOULDER

I SAY, you chaps. How is this for a scene from a "back-stage" musical comedy? Songwriter needs to write a new song for the show. It has to be the Big Number, the "hit" song which will make the production a success: but the show is already well into rehearsal and he cannot come up with the winning idea. The cast, meanwhile, are rehearsing the final scene: the one in which the heroine, who has been masquerading as her own mother, finally reveals herself as a young, attractive and utterly up-to-date young lady. "Take off those Edwardian clothes one by one," instructs the director, "and throw them over your shoulder. Over your shoulder goes this one, over your shoulder goes that one—"

Suddenly the rehearsal is halted by something akin to a Comanche war-whoop. "I've got it!" cries the songwriter and proceeds at once to write the delightful song *Over my Shoulder*:

*Over my shoulder goes one care,
Over my shoulder go two cares...*

The song, of course is a "hit", whistled by butchers' boys in the street, half-consciously hummed by bowler-hatted businessmen on the train, trilled by adolescentettes on their way home from school in the evening sunshine of a decent world.

It is the sort of thing, is it not, that could only happen in a photoplay, never in real life? Do you believe that? If so, you have been read-



Mlle. Claudette Colbert: sweet invader

ing too many fairy stories about "realism" and "real life", because this was exactly the way that *Over my Shoulder* was written during rehearsals for Miss Jessie Matthews's wonderful new musical *'Evergreen'*, which, we are assured, should be reaching a cinema near you in the not-too-distant.

EUROPEAN INVASION

NO, it is not the bad old days of the late 20th century all over again. This invasion is much more charming. After the success of the doe-eyed Viennese darling, Miss Luise Rainer, the great Hollywood studios have been falling over each other to recruit European leading ladies. Paramount has discovered Signorina Isa Miranda in an obscure Italian film and brought her across the water along with Mlle. Francisca Gaal from Buda-Pesth. Miss Simone Simon will have competition at 20th Century Fox from her new countrywomen colleague Mlle. Germaine Aussey and aussi (if you will excuse the pun) Mlle. Else Argall. Better known to the English audience is Mlle. Danielle Darrieux, the beautiful French Star of *Mayerling*. She has been potted by Universal.

Picturegoer magazine describes it as "the biggest invasion for years". And by far the nicest, say we.

MISS HARLOW'S DARING GOWN

Miss Jean Harlow, the original Platinum Blonde, has long been notable for the daring

dresses which she displays—or which display her, depending upon how you look at it—in her photoplays, but we are told that the latest creation, modelled in *The Man in Possession* pips the pile. One feminine journalist (it had to be a girl) took the nettle by the horns, so to speak, and asked her how she held the thing up. The answer, it would appear, lies in liquid adhesive. "They painted the stuff on me," explained Miss H., "and then pasted on the dress. At night it was steamed off, and you can imagine how that felt."

Miss Harlow's next photoplay is to be *Saratoga*. If you have heard that Miss Joan Crawford was to have had the part you were not hearing things. She was. But now it seems that Miss Harlow has it. Strange are the ways of Hollywood, my little ones, Strange and many-folded. Miss Crawford will now be seen in *Three Rooms in Heaven*, a story about a mannequin.

Is Romanticism a frivolous frolic?

THE ANGEL AND THE OCTOPUS

or the only answer to the world's sickness?

Or both? Romanticism is a delightful way of life, but it is also a great deal more than that. In a world sinking beneath an iron rule of falsehood and vulgarity, Romanticism is a means of preserving the human spirit.

It is easy to think of Romanticism as something rather frivolous. Charming, no doubt, but ultimately of no great importance. Romantics do not, on the whole, take great pains to disturb this comfortable notion. The idea of being a strenuous type doing something frightfully important in the world is hardly the ideal Romantic *miror*. Nonetheless, Romanticism does have a serious purpose. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that Romanticism is potentially the most important movement in the world today, and the one which may have the profoundest effect upon its future.

This may seem a curious and exaggerated claim to make. Yet Romanticism is the only current of thought which not only understands the malaise of the late 20th century but is actively doing something about it and building for the future.

What is the problem of the late 20th century? Essentially it is deracination. People are cut off from all sense of value, of personal identity, of rootedness. In place of the normal, human sense of place in the world, the modern person is given the cheap, artificial slogans of

Traditional Studies

FLOWERS

In the Light of Sacred Science

 RADITIONAL studies is the name given to that science which has been largely lost to the modern world: the science which asks not *how* things are, but *why* they are: looks not at their external mechanics but at their inner meaning. Its principles are not new, but have been understood by every traditional people from China to the Americas, including traditional Europe. Some of the concepts of traditional studies may at first seem strange and difficult, but they can help to bring meaning into a world that is increasingly denuded and impoverished.

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give/Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." So does William Wordsworth end one of his most inspired and philosophical poems. Flowers have, since the dawn of history, appealed to that fundamental inner sense which we call the sense of beauty, and to all who are not deadened comes the knowledge that beauty contains a truth and a profundity which may be inaccessible to mundane reasoning, but which lies deeper and closer to the heart of things.

"To all who are not deadened":—and yet there is so much to deaden us in these latter times. Even in Wordsworth's day, the Romantic appreciation of flowers and of nature in general was a reaction against the deadening tide of the times; an opening of doors which had been closed by the superficial smugness of the Age of Reason—and it was a reaction which was ultimately ineffective because it relied too heavily upon sentiment and too little upon the universal intellectual tradition—the *philosophia perennis* or Perennial Philosophy—which is found at all times and in all places outside such materialistic phases of culture as that of the modern Western world.

The materialistic popular culture of the modern world tries to answer all things in terms of what it calls "science": a term which we enclose in inverted commas because the shallow, baseless dogma that material explanations are all-in-all—that nothing more exists beyond the mechanics of things—has no connexion with real science but is merely part of the puerile, journalistic pseudo-philosophy of modernism.

In the case of flowers, the modern world regards them as purely a product of "evolution". Their highly complex and intricate forms, according to this "science" have no meaning whatever. The quality of beauty, according to

this "science" does not exist: it is merely a subjective reaction—a quirk of the human brain. A flower, according to this style of explanation, is a characteristic of the class of plants called angiosperms. Its purpose is to secure the transference of pollen from one plant to another by the medium of a flying insect.

This "scientific" account only explains the physical function of a flower. It does not give the smallest hint of an explanation for the variety and complexity of forms found in flowers; far less can it explain why each of these innumerable and perfect forms should be exactly as it is and not otherwise.

It is obvious that both in complexity and in variety, nature has gone far beyond the mere requirements of survival. The evolutionary hypothesis is quite inadequate to explain the real nature of flowers, just as it is inadequate to explain the real nature of anything.

In point of fact, even the general assertion that the colour and form of flowers exist for the purpose of attracting insects is misleading. Modern experimenters have pulled off the petals from geraniums and found that insects visited them just as frequently as before. The flowers of vines, ivy, box, gooseberries and sycamore are small and green and yet prove more attractive to insects than many more conspicuous varieties. The fig and the yucca both depend for pollination upon one small and specialised variety of insect, yet while the flowers of the yucca are large and bright and displayed on stems many feet high, those of the fig are small and hidden. Bees will always go to a ready source of sugar, such as the waste from a refinery, although it has no flower, and will desert their normal sources for it.

The intricacy and formal perfection of a flower is no mere device for attracting insects. If it serves that function, it does so as a by-product and not particularly efficiently (efficiency being the production of the maximum result for the minimum effort). To define the flower in such terms is like saying that a magnificent stained-glass window created by a great artist-craftsman is a device for letting light into the cathedral. It is not so much as a half-truth. It is a definition of the whole by a tiny fraction, and as such it is a falsehood pure and simple—like that of the child who went to the circus and told her mother that she had been to post a letter, having done so on the way there. To retail this mean and mealy-mouthed deception to children or adolescents is to poison them for life. Every intelligent soul, confronted with the glory of flowers, has, in the back of her consciousness, the thought:—"What is the meaning of this miracle?" and should this question be slain at birth by the "knowledge" that it is "only" a device for the

survival of a species, not only has the world been robbed of a depth and wonder in the heart of that child, but something far deeper and more sinister has occurred; something which reveals the literally diabolical influence underlying the materialist or scientist or evolutionist doctrine: the voice of God has been silenced in that child's heart. For every flower, perfect and complex in its design, is a "word" of God: the expression or manifestation in matter of an Idea in the divine Mind. Any true appreciation of flowers involves at least some faint intuition of their meaning: an intuition which the scientific approach is specifically designed to destroy. Scientific, of course, is not quite the same thing as scientific. Physical science explains phenomena from a certain limited material point of view; it does not, in itself, make any claim that these explanations are exhaustive or that they are the "real meanings" of the things concerned or that there is not a whole universe of truth and meaning of which material science by definition can know nothing. No scientist, speaking strictly as a scientist can ever deny that: but the whole suggestive force of scientific folklore as propagated by paperback philosophers, schools and broadcasting services, and by the whole tone and assumption of modernist "culture", makes just such an illegitimate denial, to the immeasurable harm of the countless souls it is supposed to be serving.

What, then, is the meaning of flowers? Let it first be said that a flower, like every natural thing, is a symbol, in the fullest and profoundest sense of that term: it is at once the manifestation of a higher reality and a sign pointing back towards that reality. The deepest meaning of a symbol can never be fully expressed in words, but only experienced through a direct intellectual perception (intellect, in the sense understood by the *sophia perennis*, being something altogether higher than mere material reason). Nevertheless, a verbal exposition can give an important indication toward the inner meaning.

In the case of flowers it must be understood that each species has its own specific symbolism which, in many cases, would require an exposition many times the length of this essay. What can be given here, therefore, must be only the most general indication of the principles underlying the manifestation of flowers as seen in the light of the true sacred science which deals with the transcendent causes of things as opposed to the material science which views only the mechanistic *modus operandi*.

Primarily, a flower is a symbol of the manifestation of the divine Ideas, or Archetypes, upon the plane of matter. The very variety and multiplicity of flowers is indicative of the pluri-

ality and uniqueness of the celestial Archetypes; while the earth from which they grow represents the pole of being which is opposite and complementary to the Essential or Archetypal: that is the material or substantial pole of manifestation (sub-Stance = literally that which "stands under"). The fact that colour is a salient feature of flowers is connected with their Archetypal symbolism, for colour is a reflection of the primal qualitative differentiation of things. Sanskrit texts often use colour (*varna*) in this sense, and the seven colours of the rainbow correspond to the seven planets of the visible cosmos, which govern the seven primal categories of being (manifested in the moral realm as the seven cardinal virtues and their inversions, the seven deadly sins). Colour is the refraction of pure white light into its primal differentiations, just as the Archetypes are the manifestation of the qualitative potentialities contained in the Divine.

In general form, the flower may be assimilated to two other symbols. The first of these is the wheel. By virtue of the radiation of the petals out from the centre, the flower partakes of the wheel's function as a symbol of cosmic manifestation—the spokes or Archetypes radiating out from the moveless, solar Centre. Secondly, the flower corresponds to the chalice (the word calyx is etymologically identical to chalice). In this aspect, the flower is the material vessel which lies open to the form-giving Essence or Archetype. Since Essence, or Spirit is often represented as a ray emanating from the supernal Sun, it is highly significant that a flower draws a great part of her sustenance from its cosmic symbol, the physical sun. Indeed, in this connexion, the flower may be seen as the product of the union of Spirit and matter, sun and earth, drawing her substance from the ground below and her essence from the sun above. She is the manifestation that takes place at the point where the vertical Divine ray strikes the horizontal plane of matter.

This symbolism is particularly explicitly developed in the case of the lotus in the East. The celestial ray striking the surface of the waters corresponds to the World-Axis passing through the centre of a particular plane of being, of which our physical plane is one example; while the blossoming of the flower represents the manifestation of a world-system (such as the physical universe) upon that plane, developing out from the central point through which the Axis passes. In the West the water-lily carries the same symbolism, while in the case of other flowers, the earth represents specifically the physical plane of being, giving the flower an identical, though less universal, significance. Thus the symbolism of the wheel radiating out from the axis

and that of the chalice filled by the rays of the divine Spirit are combined.

We may note that while a flower is primarily a natural symbol, the cultivation of new strains by human intervention, provided it be done in a spirit of order and harmony (*dharma*, *Themis*), can create an authentic symbol as can the legitimate activity of any sacred craft (the more garish cultivars, which impair the symbolic content of the flowers concerned are equivalent to the spiritually barren products of deracinated modern industry as opposed to the works of true art or craft).

The primary example of this is the cultivated rose, known to be one of the earliest, probably the earliest, of the cultivated flowers. While the wild rose with its five petals, is related to the pentacle, with its manifold significances, the cultivated rose, bearing a multiplicity of petals, both symbolises the labyrinthine depth of the Spirit and, in the stylised representations of sacred art, may be depicted with twelve, fifteen, thirty-two, sixty-four or even hundreds of petals, each number having a particular metaphysical significance.

Finally, we may say that flowers are symbols of the material manifestation of divine ideas in a particular aspect—that is to say, in the aspect of beauty. God is the quintessence of all positive qualities. All earthly goodness is the reflection of the absolute Divine Goodness; all intelligence, all joy, all harmony are reflections of the absolute Intelligence, Joy and Harmony of God. Likewise all earthly beauty is but the pale reflection of the divine Beauty. We love and are attracted by beauty only because deep in our hearts we are reminded of the one changeless and eternal Beauty with which, in the beginning, we were one. It is just such a “reminder” which flowers constitute. Symbolising the manifestation of the world in its aspect of beauty, they seek to lead us beyond the world to the unmanifest Reality which lies behind all earthly beauty.

NOTE: This essay may at first seem strange, for it is speaking a language which is unfamiliar to the modern world; yet it is the language which is common to all traditional thought the world over, not least that of traditional Christendom. As this series of Traditional Studies continues, the fundamental principles of such thought will become clearer and more compelling, having, as they do, the power of truth as their guarantee and the inner sense of truth which lies in every human heart as their witness. For a fuller and more detailed exposition of the traditional understanding of flowers, see the essay “Flowers” by Lord Northbourne in his book *Looking Back on Progress*, Perennial Books, MCMLXX.

The home is the heart of Romantia

THE HOME FRONT

HE Invisible Empire of Romantia is like an archipelago of islands spread out upon a sea of darkness. Each one of those islands is a Romanian home, its warm light glowing and its strong walls firm against the rising tide of madness.

Some of these islands are very small: a single room at a University college, a tiny flat, even a mere bedroom. Yet however small it may be, it is home, and it can be a part of the Empire of Romantia.

One of our most charming Romanian writers tells me in a letter how her first Romanian home was her bedroom. “My parents watched television. It made me so sad. It was quite unbearable to see them sitting placidly before a deluge of filth and evil which was pumped into the home each day. Their home, not mine. My home was my bedroom. Every night, between half-past six and seven I retired there. I undressed and got into bed: there I did my homework on my knees, read, wrote, listened to classical music and the latest dance-band singers, all on my darling wind-up gramophone—**Al Bowlly, Hutch, Bing Crosby, Vera Lynne, Ruth Etting**. They were my friends: they and the masters of English letters, great and small—**C. S. Lewis, E. Nesbit, Jane Austen** and a hundred others. It was a strange life, I suppose. When people came to call they had to say I was in bed! I was always in bed. And there, instead of being poisoned by the cathode-ray, I gained a solid grounding in English literature and began to be a writer. I did not know about secession then, but in my own funny way I had seceded. The whole room was part of Romantia, even though I did not know the word. I would never have anything Babylonian in it. Not a packer, not a carrier bag. Most of my books I bought from a second-hand shop but when I had paperbacks or library books I hid them in a box under the bed. No one coming into my room should see anything to make them think they were in the late 20th century.”

Such are the simple beginnings of secession: the rudiments of making one’s home a Romanian sanctuary: and if a child living in a largely unsympathetic parental home can do it, what excuse has any one else?

Of course, there are more Romanian homes now, and while a world of garish barbarity may exist outside the door, there are now places to go: other homes that are not part of Babylon. And within those homes, often more places again: cinemas, night clubs, shops, taverns. For many Romanians delight

in transforming their homes, just as they transform their own personalities: playing the game of building a world—for what is *any* world, Babylon included, but a game? Is not the success of the modern disease simply a question of the number of people it has persuaded to take its game seriously and call a monstrous, vulgar, unintelligent farce “the real world”? We have thrown its persuaders out of our houses. We no longer take the game seriously: thus our homes are not part of its world. They are part of *our* world.

Another friend writes to me of her first Romanian home: “As soon as I went to University, I decided to break with Babylon and make my room a sanctuary from all the ghastliness. It was a bit of a business, because the rooms were all furnished with identical ‘fittings’ or ‘units’ or whatever dreadful name they call them in the most horrible light wood. However I bought lots of charming, Victorian-looking drapes at a charity shop and covered everything—the awful bedside-thing, the dreadful desk, the nasty institutional bed which did not even have the decency to be cast-iron. I put my few treasures there—glass candlesticks, framed prints of Miss Katherine Hepburn and Miss Carole Lombard, a picture or two, my Victorian tea set with only three cups, and of course, my books, which transformed the plank-bookshelves. People used to say that it was like stepping into another world.”

Of course there are certain advantages to just beginning in life. Another friend, who has only recently become a Romantic faces a different problem: “There is nothing hateful in my house, but really I have never been vigilant until now. All sorts of not-really-very-nice things which one gets because one is half-thinking one ought to collaborate. Gradually I am replacing one thing after another. I started by getting everything remotely exceptionable out of the drawing-room and making that a wholly Romanian room where I could invite *any one*. Slowly I am licking the rest of the house into shape.”

It is not merely a physical, but also a psychological process whereby one transforms one’s home into a Romanian sanctuary. Another correspondent writes: “As my Romanian house takes shape and my taste is refined by photoplays and racination, more things jar with me. In my bedroom in the morning I can always hear the roar of traffic, which began to grate with me as a hateful intrusion of Babylon. Recently I had an inspiration. I lay in bed and listened to the cars and pictured them—not Babylonian cars, but beautiful, black shining *real* cars, like the ones our friends drive and the ones you see in the photoplays. I see busy streets bustling with real cars and real

people. It has added a new dimension to my sanctuary, and I feel I am colonising some of the ‘ether’ about my house: widening and strengthening my ‘bubble’.”

This mention of “ether” and of the “bubble” brings us on to the ritual side of building a sanctuary. Not every one is drawn to ritual, and if, for whatever reason, you do not wish to use such means, please feel free to ignore this passage. If, however, you have no aversion to ritual, be assured that it can help greatly in creating a true Romanian sanctuary, even if you see it as nothing more than an aid to building its reality in your unconscious mind.

This ritual is very simple. All that is needed is a stick of incense, preferably of a scent corresponding to the sun (frankincense, myrrh, saffron, amber). Choose which room is to be the heart of your sanctuary. It may be the drawing room, your study, even a bedroom. Facing East, trace upon the air with your lighted incense stick the sign of the Fora (the circle-cross on the Romanian flag and shield), saying “In the name of Themis, protect this sanctuary”. Envision the Fora standing before you, golden, glowing and as tall as yourself. Trace it again, with the same words, in the North, the West and the South. Now, Facing East again, and with eyes closed, imagine the four Foras growing and moving outwards, and about them, with you as its centre, a great golden bubble, so fine and so pure that all things of Babylon must wither and die at its touch. All within the bubble is golden light, and if any of the area about your house is enclosed within it, it too is transformed. The motor cars into real motor cars, the people into real people wearing real clothes and walking like racinated human beings. Hold this vision in your mind (it does not matter if you only *think* it rather than *see* it), and then see a golden shaft descending from heaven through the centre of your bubble, forming the roof-tree of your sanctuary and also the thread or pillar which connects you with Romania. See, high above, the towers of the celestial Empire shining in the sky.

Finally, raising your right arm, say “Hail Themis, Hail Romania, Hail Themis.”

You can repeat this ritual whenever you feel your sanctuary needs to be renewed, or purified, or more closely linked to the rest of Romania. We have known psychically sensitive people actually see this bubble even when they know nothing of Romania, and certainly it will protect and help you.

But whether or not you use ritual means, you can make your home, however large or small, a true part of the *real* world: the sane, civilised, charming world which should have been your birthright—and still can be.

THE ANGEL CROSSWORD

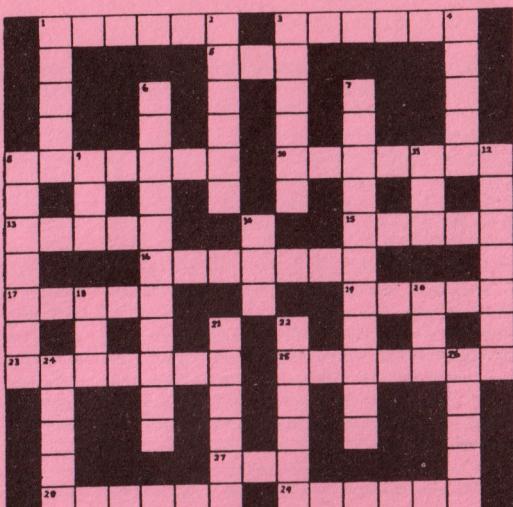
THE new crossword is quite the thing these days, so the *Angel* has one too. If you do not know how to begin a cryptic crossword, do not worry: we shall give you a complete guide in our next issue.

CLUES ACROSS

1. Our home begins in *semper fidelis* and ends as twenty. (6)
3. Slid about to become too steady. (6)
5. Forest, Delhi or South Wales. (3)
8. French dance final weight. (7)
10. Sorcerers and Romantic ladies can then change. (7)
13. Throbbing wildly, though no crooner is present, we make the first course. (5)
15. The king of the trees lies enfolded in a cornfield. (5)
16. Bubble, boil which French angle? (7)
17. Arm with nothing to find a shady place. (5)
19. I enter on and on, bringing tears to the eyes. (5)
23. Now and here, make a civilised place that's wholly part of the late 20th century. (7)
25. Grope about the capital of the darkened world for the children. (7)
27. French born maiden calling. (3)
28. Made-up roads are; "pop"-pushers and television producers should be. (6)
29. Break free from Babylon. (6)

CLUES DOWN

1. No longer a mangled rat but still an inessential player. (5)
2. Being why I enter the round tent. (6)
3. Point out, point in, we live, turn, turn. (6)
4. A pointless design, yet it shews what Romantics do not do to mix with types. (5)
6. Warning devices for racing pulses or weapons for the young? (11)
7. Aeolian harp between arches and log cabin—all begin and end with a question going back to the first times. (11)
8. Baby Long-Legs begins where the natives live. (7)
9. King of beasts above us all. (3)
11. The height of adoration: Shakespeare made much of it. (3)
12. Nancy follows French and back for occupation of her rented house. (7)
14. We hear that it keeps elegant ladies warm—especially in the climes where it grows. (3)
18. Sounds like a witticism—it is certainly cutting! (3)
20. Tip of the spire makes us like this word. (3)
21. Concerning the mental faculties: Plato tells us that the teaching of truth but does this to the soul. (6)



22. Roman works. (6)
24. Stone-works for the assault. (5)
26. Belong endlessly about aristocratic nature and bearing. (5)

COMING SOON!

 In this *Imperial Angel* we have tried to introduce you to Romantia—to shew you something of the Invisible Empire, that you might know both what it is and why it is.

There was so much to say that the difficulty was not so much what to put in as what to leave out. We have so many things planned for the future that our next issue is already bursting at the seams! Here are some of the things that the future will bring in the *Imperial Angel*:

- ◆ A multi-part feature on the nature of womanhood: Are women a different kind of creature from men? What are their special qualities? Why is femininity central to a Romantic world? Scientific data, traditional wisdom and the New Sensibility combine in this captivating study of a subject Babylon dare not freely consider.
- ◆ Romantian time: Romantia lives out of time, but how? Discover the secrets of a magical nation which combines the delights of many eras.
- ◆ Wireless: How to listen-in to two Romantian stations as well as the Imperial Home Service!
- ◆ Miss Wonderful, the Romantic comic strip;
- ◆ Angels in Babylon, a delightful Romantian novel
- ◆ Racination, the way to your Romantic self;
- ◆ Crosswords
- ◆ The latest and most glamorous photoplays
- ◆ Your letters
- ◆ Hints and tips on romanticising every aspect of your life—and so much more. Write and tell us about your ways of Romantianising your life, your Romantic adventures, your victories over Babylon. Pip-pip!